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Hollis Conservation Commission

Minutes: 12-15-22

BY: 

Present: John Mattor, Joanne Toone, Mary Hoffman, Madison Moody, Lee Klarman

Meeting started at 5:33

1. Reviewed Hillside estates discussion at Planning board meeting, site visit scheduled for Thursday December 22nd at 3pm. This might be postponed until spring based on snow cover. We will make sure to point out any further cutting and paint marking into Googins Woods and ask if there a setback for the road and a plan for erosion control for the property? At the planning board meeting there was some confusion about the original survey of the property, and it was implied that the error was the fault of the Yarumians original survey. John brought up the fact that there is an issue with a sliver of land on the 117 side of the preserve and the next property abutting on the northwest side. We had some discussion about abutters and whether everyone was listed for the site visit.

2. John clipped and brought in some newspaper articles. The first was about the emerald ash borer, which is becoming an issue for parks throughout Maine. We discussed keeping an eye on this issue.

The second article was about a park in Falmouth titled 'How not to organize a park in a rural area'. They cleaned out so much to make it "user friendly" that it devastated the park. No underbrush was left, and the pictures made it look like more of an area that was becoming pasture land than a park.

3. Indian Cellar- winter plowing, and what are we going to do once the Tea House is gone. Historical Plaque or memorial tree? Mary is going to talk to Becky Bowley or Rob Hanson about plowing. Maybe we can put snow stakes in front of the granite so it doesn't get hit again, and we need to make sure the plowing doesn't disrupt access to the trailhead.

4. Joanne proposed inviting her friend and classmate, Ruth to January meeting, to show their projects for Googins Woods for their Maine Master Naturalist certification. January 19th is our next meeting and Joanne will invite her.

-Joanne and Ruth could lead the BE Pathfinders for tours of Indian Cellar and/or Googins. Some trail clean up needed, and potential nature walks in Spring open to the public. We discussed offering a presentation to public about the projects that Joanne and Ruth had done, and potentially offering a survey for opinions from the public about the parks and what they would like to see in the future.

John brought up Spraying the Poison ivy at Indian Cellar in the Spring. We will look back at minutes from prior meeting, but we believe Catherine and Doris had mentioned spraying with vinegar.

5. We recapped some of the discussion from the November Meeting, which we did not have a quorum for. Rita Bradbury attended this meeting, and we talked a lot about the Bar Mills Dam removal and what was said/presented at the meeting in Buxton as well as the SRCC meeting that happened the same night. Our commission doesn't have a stance, but we all agree that we want to see this done in the most responsible way possible- not the cheapest way possible. We also touched on putting in a memorial plaque to the original tribe the inhabited the land and some discussion was had on a potential name change and if it was needed? Is the Indian Cellar name offensive or not. It might not be offensive, but it isn't necessarily the best name. We did determine that the artwork in the Indian Cellar brochure

should be changed at the November meeting, and that led to a discussion at the December meeting about redoing the entire brochure and using a QR codes instead of paper for people to access on their phones. The commission can decide how to do this with remaining stewardship funds.

6. John brought up the arrow markers for trails, and an audit in to see what we need to replace in both preserves. We can possibly schedule a time to do this during winter so John can work on them for spring.

7. Updating the cluster housing ordinance to give the conservation commission some say in how open space is utilized. Does it become trails or does it stay undisturbed and natural to protect habitat. Adding a second meeting to work on improvements, so the main meeting can still focus on other business and the Open space plan. For cluster housing can there be an option to paying into a fund to buy continuous land to add to land the town already owns, instead of the open space mandated in the current ordinance? More manageable recreation space for the community.

The Cluster Housing subcommittee could report back to regular members what we are doing as far as the cluster housing development improvements at the regular monthly meeting.

Some discussion was had about the Open space plan and an entire separate document verses a section of the comprehensive plan. John brought up that any land in Maine that isn't posted by the owner is technically open to public use.

8. Richard Van Langen has stepped down as a full member, so we need to add another member to fill this vacant seat- especially with all the work we have ahead of us.

Meeting ended at 6:25

Respectfully submitted,

Madison Moody