

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission Minutes
January 4th, 2022, meeting on ZOOM

In attendance: Eleanor Park, Jim Geary, Ann Ratcliff, Ann Judd, Val Bodner, Elena Scotti, Francine Mayhew, Kathleen Slack, Jane Ayres, Kristin Hutchins; Guest: Geoff Aguirre. Excused: Ellen Scull; Absent: Terry Powers, Jeff Dutra, Susan Allen.

Minutes of the December 7th, 2021, meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report Jane reported that she is using a new "Quickbooks" system which should be easier for keeping track of Conservation Commission accounts. Jim and Louise Soucy will help Jane prepare financial statements for January.

Tree Business Regarding the hazard tree on Maple Lane, it was decided to send a second letter, Certified Receipt, to Nathan Carroll as he had not responded to the first letter mailed to him in October, to discuss options for removal. Val will help draft the letter. To date, owners of trees on private property have always been responsible for the health of their trees and removals of dead trees. KM Harper is out straight with work but estimated approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 to remove the tree. The Tree Fund would be in jeopardy if Fund monies were used to take down private trees. Sadly, the Conservation Commission has no enforcement authority for needed tree removals on private property and likewise does not want to set any precedent removing responsibility from an owner to take care of trees on his/her property. The Conservation Commission is on the agenda for the Select Board meeting January 11th for discussion of next steps, unless Mr. Carroll agrees to (at the) least remove the limbs overhanging the faculty parking behind the school before then.

Eleanor requested in her letter that Mr. Carroll respond to her by the end of January. Jim will also look at the Maine State Statute and contact the Maine Municipal Association to see if Conservation Commissions or Towns have enforcement authority in these safety matters. Ann R. and Eleanor will locate the Town's Tree Inventory and draft Tree Ordinance for further consideration.

Eleanor collected \$1175 in donations in December.

Rhoades Park Ann J. had no report other than to say that a limited solicitation was going out within the week for donations to the Charlotte Rhoades Park. Letters would be sent to previous donors who had not sent contributions in 2021 and to donors who might be interested in gifts to the endowment.

Veterans Park Ann J. discussed again the July 2021 letter from landscape architect Bruce Riddell that described a deteriorating condition at the Park and a deferred maintenance that needed to be addressed. The letter had been previously sent to the Town Manager and Select Board, but because of Covid, the Town Office was only open during limited hours and the Acting Town Manager was only in the office sporadically during the summer. The result was that the new Town Manager was unaware of the issues brought up by Mr. Riddell. Marilyn Lowell, the new Town Manager, agreed to put the Vet Park on the agenda for the January 11th, 2022, Select Board meeting, and Ann said she would get a bid for the most needed improvements to the Town Manager. Ann mentioned that she explained to Marilyn that Master Gardeners who volunteer at the Rhoades Park would not be able to work at the Veterans Park because it is not a selected project by the Hancock County Extension Office (the projects are applied for and approved annually). The Public Works budget includes a summer maintenance contract for the Vet Park which is put out to bid each year. Presently the most pressing work involves 6 dead Hawthorne trees around the memorial wall needing removal, lawn renovation, power washing and restoration needed around the relief sculpture. The Park was last refurbished

with a federal grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 2004-5 in time for our centennial celebration. The renovation was overseen by the Conservation Commission, and cost \$145,00.

Chris' Pond

Jim reported that a Zoom hearing took place on December 16th on Zoom and at the Town Office for anyone who had questions about the project. Mike Rogers from Lark Studios gave a thorough presentation about the draft plan and answered questions from participants with Jim and Misha Mytar. The hearing was well attended with 14 participants. A follow up hearing will be planned January 31st at 6pm on ZOOM for additional ideas.

Jim reported for Misha/Maine Coast Heritage Trust that all but \$2,500 had been raised by MCHT to purchase the two properties abutting Chris' Pond. The Letcher property has been purchased, and an option to purchase the Deardon lot has been signed with a closing date at the end of March 2022. Jim and Misha will be meeting with a representative from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in January at the Pond to be sure that plans would be acceptable by any DEP standards or mandates. Jim will meet with the Code Enforcement Officer January 10th at 11am regarding improvements to the Letcher lot. The Commission discussed circulating the FAQ sheet to the Elementary School newsletter, the High School newsletter, and notice boards at the SWH Library and Harbor House. The FAQ sheet is on the Town's website. Also, the derelict boat was removed from the Letcher property.

NEXT MEETING: CONSERVATION COMMISSION FEBRUARY 1st, 2022 on ZOOM

REMINDER: JANUARY 31st, 2022, Chris' Pond Hearing for comments on Proposed Plan for Improvements