

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 2024 @ 4:30 PM
Town Offices and by Zoom

I. Call to Order:

Voting Members Present: Ann Ratcliff, Co-Chair; Francine Mayhew, Co-Chair; Kristin Hutchins, Secretary; Kathi Lindquist **Excused:** Ellen Scull, Eleanor Park, Kathleen Slack

Associate Members Present: Dick Dimond, Valerie Bodner and by Zoom: Ann Judd, Treasurer
Absent: Jim Geary, Terese Powers

Guests: Kathryn Stand and by Zoom: Jay Morgan

II. Agenda, Approval / Modifications: Kristin moved, Kathi seconded, to approve the agenda as presented. Passed, 4-0-0.

III. Public Comment: May be made in person at the meeting or submitted, prior, to: townclerk@southwestharbor.org.

Dick reported the Herrick Rd. Clinic – part of Northern Light hospitals, is closing.

IV. Approval of Minutes: Francine moved, Kathi seconded, to accept the minutes of 24.2.7 and 24.3.6 as presented. Passed, 4-0-0.

V. Treasurer's Report: Dick asked for clarification on the limits of the Endowment Fund, whether it was truly an 'endowment' fund.

Ann reviewed the first quarter financial report. Attached. The CC is close to its fundraising goal for the Veterans' Park.

VI. New Business:

- A. Consideration of Application for Associate Membership: Kathryn Strand is a member of the Mount Desert Land & Garden Preserve which has been a supporter of the Charlotte Rhoades Park. She is interested in conservation and has worked for the Preserve as the Director of Development and Communications. The MD Land & Garden Preserve, in addition to overseeing the Asticou and Thuya Gardens now manages the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden. Kristin moved, Ann R seconded, to appoint Kathryn Strand as an Associate member to the CC. Passed, 4-0-0.

VII. Old Business:

- A. Tree Warden: Ann R said she and Eleanor are developing a list of places in SWH and Manset to plant trees. The CC should work with adjacent landowners in hopes of gaining their cooperation in new tree plantings maintenance.

- B. Veterans' Park: Ann met with Frosty to discuss options for replacement plantings. She talked about alternate and replacement plantings and said the granite medallion will be cleaned, the grass will be fertilized, and the paths will be repaired.

On Memorial Day, there will be a sandwich board installed at the Park with the names of the donors.

B.1. Report: CR Park, wildlife cameras will show deer. A sculptural element that was part of the Bruce Riddell original design has been underwritten by a donor and will be installed in early May. Tickets for the 2024 Butterfly Release are available now on the CRP website and are already selling.

- C. Chris's Pond Update: Ann R reported that the Friends of Chris's Pond are working on a history including photos for a public presentation. Gina Silverman and Greg Crosley are working on a mission statement to present to the SWH Select Board.

Chris's Pond needs monitors to keep an eye on its welfare until (and when and if) the annual meeting approves funds to pay for this activity. Ann J will send out a schedule for volunteers to take a week each (between now and July 1, 2024) to check on the Pond and report any problems. Pending the annual meeting vote, we will hope for a paid person to look out for the pond, July 1 – September 30 on a weekly basis. Beginning October 1, oversight of the Pond will be monthly.

Valerie, continues to work on the water studies. Only one of the three streams being monitored, is currently flowing. Valerie thinks the one channelized flow will likely be defined as a stream which could trigger the DEP's more rigorous permitting process before we would remove any of the sedge. When the water is low in winter the sedge can make skating difficult. Rather than removing the sedge, raising the water level above the top of the sedge would leave the ice smooth. The Pond is 20-25% covered with vegetation. In spring, before the vegetation is at peak growth, Valerie wants to have a drone fly over the Pond to get a better look at the Pond. She would like to look again at the dissolved oxygen, pH, water temperature and ambient temperature. Maine Coast Heritage Trust will soon be transferring the land to the Town which will kick off Friends of Chris's Pond. What is the relationship between the Friends and the Town?

VIII. Adjournment and Schedule Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 @ 4:30 pm
The meeting was adjourned.

THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO TAKE ACTION ON ANY ITEM THAT IS LISTED ON THIS AGENDA. *Public comment, limited to 3 minutes per speaker, is an opportunity for the Commission to listen to concerns and receive information from the public. The Commission will not engage in dialogue but will investigate as appropriate. Speakers and Commission members should be always respectful and professional.*