

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 2nd 2023

Present: Francine Mayhew, Ann Judd, Kristin Hutchins, Ellen Scull, Valerie Bodner, Kathleen Slack, Jane Ayres Peabody, Eleanor Park, Elena Scotti (zoom), Terry Powers (zoom), Ann Ratcliff (zoom). Excused: Jim Geary. Absent: Jeff Dutra. Francine Mayhew presided.

Jane moved and Eleanor seconded the adoption of the agenda. All in favor. There was no one with a conflict of interest. Jane moved and Eleanor seconded approval of the minutes of April 18th meeting. All in favor. Kathleen moved and Jane seconded the motion that the Conservation Commission reserves the right to take action on any item that is listed on the agenda. All in favor.

I Treasurer's Report

Jane mentioned that we could request a report on our endowment account at Maine Community Foundation. Eleanor moved and Ellen seconded a motion that we receive a report on our investment account.

II Informational Meeting on Chris' Pond at the Town Office April 24th, 2023

Jane reported that the meeting was well attended with just under 50 people in person and on zoom. The meeting lasted about 90 minutes. There were many good questions, some concerns expressed, and plenty of discussion about the Chris' Pond project, which was to be subject to a vote at the Town meeting one week later.

III Select Board meeting, April 25th, 2023

Chris' Pond was on the agenda and about 50 people attended the meeting in person and on zoom. The Select Board answered some questions, directed Misha Mytar to answer some questions, and Kristin Hutchins also answered some questions. The Commissioners expressed thanks to Misha for her dedication, hard work and time spent at many Select Board meetings during the past year and a half. The Select Board would like to have the Conservation Commission return to a June Select Board meeting to report back on information regarding Chris' Pond maintenance, wall stability and general stewardship.

Regarding certain allegations made against the Commission of possible violations of the conduct policy, the Select Board stated April 25th that they did not feel anyone had acted inappropriately. At the May 2nd meeting of the Conservation Commission, both Voting and Associate members expressed dismay and disappointment regarding the faulty accusations, insinuations, and innuendo made toward both Misha Mytar and the Conservation Commission by a Select Board member during recent Select Board meetings. Everyone felt that it was completely inappropriate behavior.

IV Rhoades Park

Ann J reported that weekly volunteers had done a lot of clean up since mid-April. The water was turned on during the last week in April; unfortunately, the following day a plumbing problem caused a leak in the barn with water flooding on the floor. Thankfully, it was discovered soon enough to fix before any major damage occurred. Spring work will include fencing repair and exterior painting of the Barn.

June 30th, Friday, will be the date of the Open House, weather permitting.

Veterans Park

Ann J. and Ellen will take a look at the Veterans Park to check on the plantings and potential work for the renovation of the Park. A town-wide solicitation is being planned for the fall to help raise funds for replacement plantings, lawn re-hab, resetting stones, and continuing tree care.

Chris' Pond

At the Town Meeting on May 1st, voters accepted the gift of land offered by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Jane made a motion and Ellen seconded to call the area Chris' Pond Park going forward. All in favor. Chris' Pond Park will be put on the agenda for the June 6th meeting for discussion of practical stewardship of the Pond. The Commission discussion will need to include but not be limited to topics such as signage, parking, trash, pond retaining wall engineering, dam engineering, the shed, volunteer help (suggested as Friends of Chris' Pond), pond conservation, and a proper survey of the Town's existing ownership. Jane and Kathleen will gather information about grant possibilities.

Misha also discussed the goal of applying for the LWCF grant during the next cycle.

Ann R. made a motion to move forward working with the Selectmen on a timeline and action plan for the Chris' Pond Park project. Eleanor seconded the motion. All in favor.

Tree Warden Update

Eleanor reported that she was waiting to hear from Eagle Arborculture regarding the date for fertilization of selected trees.

Membership

Ann R. moved and Eleanor seconded the nomination for re-appointment of Jane Ayres Peabody, Treasurer, as a **voting member for the term 7/01/2023 – 6/30/2026**. All in favor.

Jane moved and Ellen seconded the nomination for re-appointment of Kathleen Slack as a **voting member for the term 7/01/23 – 6/30/2026**. All in favor.

Jane moved and Kathleen seconded reaffirmation of Eleanor Park, Voting Member, as **Co-Tree Warden**. All in favor. Existing term 7/1/22 – 6/30/2025

Eleanor moved and Jane seconded the nomination of Ann Ratcliff, Voting Member, as **Co-Tree Warden**. All in favor. Existing term 7/01/2022 – 6/30/2025.

Jane moved and Eleanor seconded the nomination of Francine Mayhew, Voting Member **to be Chair**. All in favor. Existing term 7/01/2022 – 6/30/2025.

Commission E-mail Addresses

Francine told members if anyone was interested in having a Town email to let her know by June 1st.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 6th, at 430pm at the Town Office. No July meeting.