

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission
Minutes
September 7, 2021

Attending: Jane Ayres, Valerie Bodner, Kristin Hutchins, Ann Judd, Francine Mayhew, Eleanor Park, Ann Ratcliff, Ellen Scull, Elena Scotti and Kathleen Slack, and guest Misha Mytar. Absent: Jeff Dutra, Jim Geary, Terry Powers. Meeting was held In-Person at Chris' Pond.

Membership

The Commission voted to membership the following, plus one membership change:

New Voting Members: Jim Geary and Kathleen Slack

New Associate Members: Valerie Bodner and Kristin Hutchins

Moved from Voting to Associate Member: Susan Allen

Jim Geary was voted in as the new Chair. Both Jim and Kathleen have been past members of the Commission.

Trees

At the Town Meeting in July, the Tree Fund appeared to be missing on the warrant. Eleanor addressed it at the meeting because our 2021 tree projects were dependent on the Town's appropriation. Although it appeared to be missing, it turned out it was fully funded (\$2,250.00) and had been posted to 'Town of SWH Operations' from 'Town Boards and Committees' in the budget.

Pemetic Tree Planting

Eleanor and Ann R. reported that 2 Acer Rubrum trees were planted the third week in August on the front "green" of Pemetic School. The Pemetic granite sign was relocated between the trees, and hay scented fern sod was put down in the planting area. Williams Irrigation installed sprinklers for the trees and lawn area. This completes a 5-year initiative!

The Tree Fund solicitation will be mailed shortly. Jane, Eleanor, and Ellen will work to get it out by mid-September. Ann J will get it on the Town's website or newsletter, and perhaps the Pemetic newsletter. Kris Harper will be contacted by Eleanor for the tree inspection.

Charlotte Rhoades Park

The Charlotte Rhoades Park received a national award from the Garden Club of America in July for Civic Improvement. Ann J suggested that the plaque be hung in the Town Office.

The Butterfly Release benefit took place on July 29th at the Park. The event was divided into two sessions and was so successful that the split sessions will always take place going forward.

Suggestions for improvements in access and parking were offered by Kristin, but the rhythm and flow of the guests coming and going were generally very smooth. (Thanks to all who helped to make the event a great accomplishment during a Covid summer.)

The Garden Club of Mt. Desert gave the gift of a flat screen TV to be used for video presentations to visitors, groups and field trips, and was installed in the Barn in August.

Monarch tagging is well underway, and there are many hatching cages full of caterpillars and chrysalides.

Field trips have been scheduled for September for area elementary schools.

Chris' Pond

Town voters approved the grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund in June for the Chris' Pond project.

Misha updated the Commission on the abutting properties. MCHT is now under option to purchase the Dearden property (5 acres behind the pond and including the majority of Chris's Lane). MCHT has also exercised its option agreement for the adjacent Letcher property. The total purchase price and associated costs for the two properties is \$250,000 - MCHT has currently raised about \$165,000 towards this goal. The addition of the Dearden lot may allow reconsideration and some flexibility of usage around the pond.

Next steps:

- It would be helpful at this time to have a survey of the Chris' Pond property under current town ownership (the acquisition properties have been surveyed). Misha will talk to Tom Benson who has surveyed the other properties and Ann J will speak with the acting Town Manager.
- Major donors to support the project are also needed.
- This fall, we should reinitiate an effort to inform the public about the overall opportunity to acquire and protect additional open space and potentially affordable housing for the Town.
- Misha will be available on **Sunday, September 19th, at 10am** for a walk around the properties with Commission members and anyone else who is interested in the project. Ann J will send out a reminder to everyone.
- The LWCF grant proposal to fund improvements at Chris's Pond is due in July 2022.

Agenda for October 12, 2021 – At Chris' Pond, 4pm

- 1 Approval of minutes of September meeting
- 2 Tree Business - Tree Fund Appeal, Tree Inspection
- 3 Rhoades Park
- 4 Budgets for 2022-2023
- 5 Veterans Park
- 6 Chris' Pond