

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission Minutes
October 4, 2022

In attendance: Jane Ayres, Eleanor Park, Ellen Scull, Francine Mayhew, Kathleen Slack, Ann Judd, Valerie Bodner, Natasha Johnson (SB Liaison); By zoom: Elena Scotti, Ann Ratcliff, Terry Powers; Excused: Kristin Hutchins, Jim Geary, Susan Allen; Absent: Jeff Dutra

Acceptance of Minutes of September 6, 2022 were moved by Jane Ayres and seconded by Francine Mayhew; all in favor: unanimous.

Treasurer's Report Jane requested that the name for Maine Community Foundation Endowment Fund for the Charlotte Rhoades Park be called the Charlotte Rhoades Park SWHCC Endowment Fund. It was moved by Kathleen and seconded by Jane to make this change; all in favor: unanimous. There are some designated endowment donations in our checking/savings accounts waiting to move to the Maine Community Foundation.

Rhoades Park Ann J reported that the Park and gardens are at the end of their season. Donated spring flowering bulbs are to be planted this week by volunteers from the Garden Club of Mt. Desert. Two sections of broken fencing that blew down last winter will need to be replaced. Valerie has completed a Monarch caterpillar Study for Monarch Watch. This was a great summer for butterflies. The 2023-2024 Budget was approved (moved by Eleanor, seconded by Francine; all in favor: unanimous) with a \$1,500.00 increase to cover increased labor costs to add a part time weekend Barn attendant for July and August. The total budget request from the Town will be \$9,000, 19% of the overall cost of maintaining and operating the Park. The remaining operating costs are covered by private donations and the Park's endowment.

Tree Business Eleanor went over her report on the Tree Inspection that took place on September 28th (see report attached) with Billy Guest of Eagle Arboriculture, who is now doing the tree work for the Conservation Commission. Billy will be working on various trees and do general clearing work at the Norwood Cove overlook on Main Street. The 2023-2024 Tree Fund Budget was approved (moved by Kathleen and seconded by Ellen; all in favor: unanimous) reflecting a small increase of \$50.00 for Tree Fund Solicitation mailing expenses. Francine offered to assist Eleanor with Tree Warden business. Donations for the Tree Fund are still coming in, but not as regularly.

Veterans Park Ann J reported that the park has had a good clean up by Frost Farms and looks better. New shrubs will be planted later this fall or in spring. Ellen will keep an eye on the Park over the winter.

Chris' Pond Ann J reported that she had spoken with Misha Mytar of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. The house is scheduled for demolition this week on the Letcher property. Misha will be looking for volunteers for further clean-up at the site. Misha will attend the November meeting and will give the Commission an update on the Pond project. The skating group will be coming to clean up the shed at the Pond this month.

Buffering Standards for Commercial Projects Terry asked the Commission if buffering standards existed in the SWH Land Use Ordinance for new commercial projects. The Seal Cove Road shopping strip was built without any apparent required landscape buffering or appropriate entrances, before standards were required, but provides an example of what shouldn't happen on new projects. Currently the Planning Board does require buffering between residential and commercial neighbors on new projects. It has not asked the Conservation Commission to offer buffering guidance to applicants in many years, nor do we know if there is any Planning Board follow up to ensure buffering installations have taken place, nor any consequence if they haven't taken place. Because the Task Force for the Comprehensive Plan was to have a hearing the day following our meeting, Eleanor offered to go to the meeting to bring these issues to the attention of the group. The Conservation Commission is dedicated to maintaining the scenic quiet character of Southwest Harbor and wants to continue offering guidance on new projects where screening is required. Ann Ratcliff will continue to be the C C's liaison to the Planning Board and we will let the Planning Board know that they can depend on her for assistance when needed.

By-Laws Valerie, Ellen, Elena, and Ann J met in advance of the meeting to edit Ann's draft of the By-Laws. Valerie rewrote the document with better clarity and organization; Val went over it in detail with Commission members. After some discussion and a few edits, Kathleen moved to accept the By-Laws as amended; Jane seconded; all in favor: unanimous. Ann will send it on to the Town Manager

Conservation Commission Budget for 2023-2024 was presented with no increases at \$1,675. Jane moved to accept the budget, Eleanor seconded; all in favor: unanimous.

Harbor Avenue Ann J reported that she had spoken to the Public Works Director about placing granite blocks at the end Harbor Avenue, and he agreed to put some out at some point in the future.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 2nd, at 530pm, Town Office, and on ZOOM