

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission

Minutes

October 12, 2021 – At Chris' Pond

In attendance: Jim Geary, Ann Judd, Francine Mayhew, Kathleen Slack, Eleanor Park, Jane Ayres, guest: Misha Mytar. Absent: Voting Members: Ann Ratcliff, Ellen Scull; Associate members: Susan Allen, Valerie Bodner, Jeff Dutra, Kristin Hutchins, Terry Powers, Elena Scotti

1 **Minutes** of September 7, 2021, were approved.

2 **Membership**

Elena Scotti was voted in as an Associate member. The Commission has a full roster of Voting Members: Jim Geary, Chair, Jane Ayres, Treasurer, Francine Mayhew, Eleanor Park, Tree Warden, Ann Ratcliff, Ellen Scull, and Kathleen Slack. Associate members: Susan Reiff Allen, Valerie Bodner, Jeff Dutra, Tree Warden, Kristen Hutchins, Ann Judd, Secretary, Terry Powers, Elena Scotti.

It was decided that future meetings will be on the first Tuesday of the month at 400pm on ZOOM because of the lingering presence of COVID-19, until the Commission decides to resume in-person meetings in Spring. If we do not have a quorum for the first Tuesday, we will try for the first Wednesday of the month.

3 **Tree Business**

The Tree Fund Appeal has had a good response with about \$3,000+ of gifts received by the Conservation Commission. Eleanor met with arborist Kris Harper to inspect trees for winter work. Having been advised by Kris, Eleanor is sending a letter to Nathan Carroll who owns property behind the school on Maple Lane to advise him to remove hazardous limbs from a dead tree (or remove the entire tree) so that cars and pedestrians will not be in potentially harmed. Other trees that will need removal are the 6 Hawthorns planted in 2004 circling the memorial that have unfortunately failed at the Veterans Park. Kris will also need to prune the Elms at the Veterans Park as part of his work plan. Regarding the new tree plantings at Pemetec School, Ann J. will find out if Frost Farms has sent an invoice for the planting work so we can determine our payment for it coming from the Tree Fund.

4 **Veterans Park**

The Veterans Park has been looking shabby this season. Architect Bruce Riddell, who designed the Park, wrote a letter to the Town Manager and Select Board about the condition of the Park, pointing out (the same) dead trees that needed removal and other needed improvements. Ann J. met with Bruce Riddell for specifics, made a list, and will meet with Melissa Frost about needed work to get accomplished by next summer. In September Ann met with Dana Reed, Acting Town Manager with list in hand to point out the necessary work. A small amount of donations totalling \$205.00 was taken from the donation box in the Park. 200 Red tulips have been given to the Park as a gift from the Garden Club of Mt. Desert.

5 **Beautification**

Eleanor pointed out that the Post Office Parking lot is looking unkempt and needs a "new dose of beautification and care". Everyone agreed and after a short discussion it was decided that the Commission would like to find a way to make improvements and begin negotiations between the owners of the Post Office lot and Town. The Town is supposed to be responsible for care of the property, but seems to have forgotten its responsibilities, other than plowing, leaving it to the Conservation Commission to determine ways and means for improvement.

6 **Charlotte Rhoades Park**

Visitation is still strong at the Park although much of the plantings have been cut or pulled. The parking lot will remain open to the public until the first week in December, when a rope will be hung across the driveway so that the parking area, which gets very soft with a lot of winter moisture, will not be damaged by vehicles. Pedestrian access will be available throughout the winter, however. Volunteers will be planting spring flowering bulbs in October that are a gift from the Garden Club of Mount Desert. Benches and other winter storage will be put inside the Barn by the end of the month. It has been a successful season.

7 **Budgets**

Initial Draft budgets were presented to review. The Tree Fund budget and part of the Conservation Commission budgets were missing at Town meeting, so it will be important to present budgets that can be reviewed, approved, and implemented without a lot of confusion. Ann will ask Elena and Terry to help format the budgets – Tree Fund, Conservation Commission, Chris’ Pond, Rhoades Park, (and Veterans Park if needed,) – so they make sense to everybody who views them. The Commission voted to add \$1000 for the Chris’ Pond project and grant planning expenses, unless we can locate missing funds of \$500 that were in the 2021 Conservation Commission Budget. If the \$500 is found in the administrative account, we will request only \$500 for the 2022 Chris’ Pond Budget. The Commission also decided to ask the Town to put the Chris’ Pond budget in a Reserve account. Jane will make this request to the Town. Budgets will need to be approved by December.

8 **Chris’ Pond**

Misha gave an update on the project. Lark Studios is going to prepare a concept plan for expanding and improving Chris’ Pond in preparation for application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant and to inform the public and the Select Board. MCHT will cover the cost of this work. We will need to have a preliminary meeting with the Selectmen to redescribe the project, but prior to that, the Commission needs to host a “stake-holder” meeting at the Pond to confirm the interest level of SWH residents and others who will support the project.

There are several things that need to be accomplished:

- The stakeholder meeting needs to take place as soon as possible at the Pond.
- Commission members will need to present to the Select Board at the November meeting.
- Budget for Chris’ Pond needs to be done by December and the Reserve account requested.
- Sarah Hinckley or other newspaper writer need to be contacted for an article explaining the project to get into the paper by the time the Commission meets with the Select Board.
- Lark Studio project to be completed asap with project information that can be placed at the Pond on the warming hut or in a “kiosk” information area, and in the Town Office.
- The Historical Society needs to be engaged in this project for public awareness and should be contacted for stories that can go on the Town’s website and their website.
- The Conservation Commission needs to take a leading role in this project.

NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 2nd, 4pm ZOOM