

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission
Minutes for meeting January 5th, 2021

In attendance: Jane Ayres, Susan Allen, Ellen Scull, Ann Ratcliff, Francine Mayhew, Kristin Hutchins, Ann Judd, and Misha Mytar (Maine Coast Heritage Trust). Excused: Elena Scotti, Terry Powers.

Minutes of the November 11th, 2020 meeting were approved

I Treasurer's Report Jane reported some year-end donations had come in for the Charlotte Rhoades Park and the Southwest Harbor Tree Fund. Jane will meet with Eleanor to verify late November and early December Tree Fund gifts before applying them to year end totals. Jane moved funds approved at the last meeting from the Conservation Commission savings account to our endowment fund at the Maine Community Foundation. Ann J. reported that some PayPal donations had come in through the Charlotte Rhoades website. Ann added that for 2020, overall donations to the Park were down about 25%, owing to the pandemic, late spring delay in opening, reduced visitation during the summer and fall, and cancelled Butterfly Release.

II Pemetic Tree Planting Project

Ann Ratcliff reported that Frosty is putting together the estimate for the project. It is hoped that the installation can take place in the spring of 2021.

III Chris' Pond

Ann J. reported that the Conservation Commission Budget had been redrafted to include \$500 for the Chris' Pond expansion project. After some discussion it was decided that at the 1-13-21 Selectmen's Budget Review meeting, Jane, Ann R., and Ellen would attend the meeting and explain that the requested sum was seed money for mailings, explanation signage, and flyers for SWH residents to learn about the expansion project. Next month, Jane, Misha, and other Commissioners and supporters will go before the Selectmen to present the expansion project in greater detail.

Misha reported that Doug Beck from the Land and Water Conservation Fund had sent word that official approval had been given to the Town to apply for a grant for funding for the Chris' Pond project. Misha also mentioned that Greg Johnson, civil engineer, had done a review of the abutting property for "fitness" for the preliminary plan. In addition to the LWCF, partnerships with the Town could include the Island Housing Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and Maine Community Foundation.

During the next number of weeks, it will be very important to get assistance from residents and project supporters who can spread the word about the expansion. Ways to accomplish this would be through the Chris' Pond Facebook Group, local paper editorial page or article (or both), pond skaters, and also forming a citizen's committee to identify sources of financial support.

Next meeting: TBD