

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes for
September 5th, 2023

I In attendance: Francine Mayhew (Presiding), Kristin Hutchins, Kathleen Slack, Ann Judd, Ellen Scull, Dick Dimond, Valerie Bodner. Zoom: Ann Ratcliff, Elena Scotti, Natasha Johnson. Excused: Eleanor Park, Terry Powers, Jane Ayres, Jim Geary. Guest in audience: Aimée Williams.

Ellen moved and Francine seconded to adopt the agenda; all in favor. No member present had a conflict of interest with the agenda. Ellen moved and Francine seconded to accept the minutes of August 2nd; all in favor.

II Reports, Updates, and Communications

Treasurer Report. Ann J mentioned that she will turn over the receipts and deposits to an accountant to bring our finances up to date since summer started, as Treasurer Jane was still out of town.

Tree Warden Update. The Tree Fund mailing has gone out, as of the last week in August and we are hoping for a good response. With regard to potential tree plantings along Main Street in front of the property belonging to “Joey’s”, Ann R. mentioned that it would be good to get ahold of the Planning Board’s requirements for the “Joey’s” property before making any decisions.

Rhoades Park Update. Ann J reported that area elementary school field trips were scheduled for September 11-15. Visitation continued to be strong throughout August and the Monarch Tagging program has been underway since early August. Fencing repairs should be taking place during the first week in September. After some discussion about the need to discuss Long Range Planning and succession for the Rhoades Park, Ann R. made a motion for Ann J. to solidify an advisory committee for this purpose, to include representation from the Conservation Commission and other interested individuals. Seconded by Ellen. All in favor.

Veterans Park Update. Ann J reported that the appeal letter is being prepared and that Commission members will be asked to help process the appeal in late September to mid-October. Dick is going to check on any possible grant opportunities from the Veterans Administration, the State, etc. Ellen mentioned that although some plant material could be purchased this fall, we should wait until next year to do any replacement planting. We have been awarded a generous grant of \$2,000 from the Garden Club of Mount Desert Island for improvements to the Park.

Chris Pond Update. Kristen did some research on an alternative grant program to the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that had been previously considered for Chris’ Pond. The grant is called The Recreational Trails Program Grant and is offered by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. It allows grants of up to \$120,000 and offers an 80% match. This year’s grants are due by the 29th of September. Misha Mytar from Maine Coast Heritage Trust felt that we had a better chance of being awarded this grant over the LWCF Grant. Kristin will check with Carolyn Ball as the potential writer of the grant, but it will not be applied for in 2023 with such a short timeline.

Valerie reported on the Selectmen meeting of August 22nd. She has been working with Billy Helprin and Bonnie Norwood who will conduct some studies with the Pemetic 6th grade science students that will be repeated each year. They will look at the watershed, land uses, disturbances, and areas of concern that might affect water quality and the data will be biological, physical and chemical. Tests will include water sampling for temperature, dissolved oxygen, suspended solids, alkalinity, PH, water chemistry and how it impacts organisms. The students will go before the Select Board and report their findings. The students will also collect historical data about the Pond from the Hancock County Registry of Deeds, and the Historical Society. Pemetic art students will create habitat enhancements such as bat houses, bird houses, and platforms. Val also reported about the sedge that stands in the middle of the Pond and will be in touch with Maine DEP about vegetation management and permits that may be required to remove it. She will report back to the Select Board about any requirements as soon as possible.

Next meeting: Tuesday October 3rd (subject to change)

Adjournment moved by Francine and seconded by Ellen. All in Favor.