

Southwest Harbor Conservation Commission
Minutes of October 15, 2020 meeting via ZOOM

In attendance: Jane Ayres, Ann Ratcliff, Eleanor Park, Kristin Hutchins (ex-Officio), Ellen Scull, Elena Scotti (for Terry Powers), Ann Judd. Excused: Susan Allen Absent: Francine Mayhew

Chris' Pond

Jane reported funds are being sought from potential grantors, most significantly a federal grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for purchase of the abutting property to the pond. Maine Coast Heritage Trust is looking into ways and means before the next deadline for decision making (February) while also working with the Town to develop a plan and budget. The Conservation Commission wants to keep this topic current with the Select Board over the coming months.

Tree Fund

Eleanor reported that about \$1700 of checks had come in since she started making deposits and sending acknowledgements October 1st. Ann J added that about that same amount had come during September after the solicitation was mailed. It appears that a good response has come in from the request for contributions for the Pemetic tree planting project. Eleanor spoke with Steve at the SWH Water Department regarding marking the water mains that Williams Irrigation might be able to tap into for irrigation for new trees and the front lawn of Pemetic School. Ann J. will contact Williams Irrigation to coordinate a meeting with the Water Department/Eleanor. Williams should be able to bring the water out from the school building if necessary, but it is good to have other options available. A bid from Williams for irrigation is still needed to put together a budget for the project. Ann R. has been working with the Pemetic principal to formulate a budget for the trees and groundcover plantings and get a proposal from Frost Farms who offered to discount the trees and plant material to help make the project happen.

Treasurer

Jane mentioned that although we approved funds to be moved to the Charlotte Rhoades Endowment at the Maine Community Foundation back in January, after successful endowment fundraising at the close of 2019, it didn't happen because of the Covid uncertainty which delayed all Southwest Harbor budgets for 2020/21. Elena suggested to wait until after the election to move funds, and the Commission voted (again) to move at least \$60,000 from our savings account as soon as it was prudent.

Buffering

Ann R told the Commission that it might be a good idea have members of the Conservation Commission review the Buffering standards to help clarify them for easier enforcement. The Commission previously had a Buffering Committee that worked with the Planning Board. Ann will get the current regulations from the Code Enforcement Officer to distribute to members for their perusal.

Rhoades Park

The season is winding down at the Charlotte Rhoades. The last volunteer day was October 15th. Ann J. anticipates that the driveway entrance will be paved soon, and the area on the lower lawn will be graded and seeded in preparation for installation of new swings next season. Some Norway maples are to be removed by KM Harper as soon as permissions from abutters are given (trees are on property lines). Additionally, repairs to the stone wall and to the north end of the parking lot should be completed before next spring. A pruning class taught by the Hancock County Extension Office educator has been rescheduled for April 15, 2021, if things are back to normal by then. The Southwest Harbor Library is planning a lantern stroll for November 25th; Jane will coordinate the event with the Library.

Attendance

There was a discussion among the Commissioners regarding attendance at meetings because of uncertainty about not having enough participants to make a quorum. Starting immediately, to ensure the legitimacy of meetings, voting members need to let Ann J know if they will be participating when monthly meetings are announced, and, starting January 1st, excused absences will be required for all voting and affiliate members.

Next Meeting: November 11th or 12th at 4pm by ZOOM (to be confirmed)