

CAMDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting - February 24, 2016
Washington Street Conference Room

Members present: Vicki Doudera, Roger Rittmaster (Chair), Alison McKellar, Tom Hopps, Doug Johnson, Kristen Lindquist, Leonard Lookner (Select Board liason). Members not present: Carla Ferguson, Robin Kern

Meeting called to order by Roger at 7pm.

Minutes of the previous meeting, January 13, 2016, were read and approved.

Vicki Doudera and Alison McKellar, approved by the Select Board to membership in this Commission, February 2, were welcomed.

OLD BUSINESS

1) Summary of February 2 Select Board Meeting

The Select Board approved two new CCC members (Vicki Doudera and Allison McKellar), increasing the CCC membership to eight. The Select Board approved \$500 from the CCC reserve fund to support the Coastal Mountains Nature Program to compensate leaders for their time and travel expenses. The Select Board approved the ability of the CCC to fundraise in order to support the nature walks.

2) Nature Walks

Roger reported that Coastal Mountains Land Trust (CMLT), the co-sponsor of the nature walks, did not wish to have fundraising included as part of the walks, because it could conflict with CMLT's own fundraising efforts. After some discussion, the CCC suggested that that funding for the walks be split 50:50 between the Town of Camden and CMLT, with each contribution becoming a line item in the respective budgets, starting in 2017. Roger will discuss this with Ian Stewart from CMLT and Pat Finnegan.

3) Ash Tree Survey

Anticipating the Ash Tree Borer invading this area, our third survey of roadside ash trees in Camden will take place on March 1st from 1:00 – 2:30 pm, Doug reported. Doug will need at least two of us to join him in the survey. He also read from the Arbor Day Tree City Bulletin #76 re: control of Ash Borer. Roger will distribute copies to us.

4) Pearl-John Streets Walking Trail

Following discussion of the site, Kristen moved (seconded by Vicki) that we suggest to the Camden Rockport Pathways Committee that The Bog and adjacent land be considered for a nature/pedestrian walkway from Park Street to John Street and possibly beyond to Merryspring and the Hannaford Market complex. The motion passed unanimously. Roger will talk to the Chair of that Committee, Geoff Scott, to discuss the potential for this trail and our interactions thus far with Philip Carter.

5) Camden Natural Lands Inventory

In 2008, fulfilling a request of the Select Board, CCC completed a Natural Lands Inventory, a comprehensive assessment of significant undeveloped lands within the Town. This was to mark "the beginning of a valuable community dialogue about how best to ensure the future of the natural lands within our Town that sustain Camden's scenic integrity, ecological health and biological diversity. While respecting the rights and needs of every private landowner, the Town has an

opportunity to work collaboratively with those landowners who want to sustain Camden's natural beauty for future generations". (Quote from CCC report to Select Board, November 19, 2008.) Revisiting this inventory and dividing the map into focus areas, Roger requested each member assume an area for his/her attention. This done , Roger will verify to us.

In describing how to evaluate land from a real estate perspective, Vicki introduced us to a website, Vision Government Solutions (www.vgsi.com/vision/applications/parceldata/ME/Home.aspx) to aid in evaluating properties.

NEW BUSINESS

6) Camden Harbor Water Quality

Laité Beach in Camden and Goodies Beach in Rockport are among the most polluted in Maine, and Megunticook River is impaired, based on two surveys, Alison reported. Although the sources of pollution are multifactorial, there are initiatives we could start now to address the problem. One factor contributing to pollution is the storm drains. Alison recommended that CCC initiate an educational campaign to alert the public to not add anything foreign to the drains (such as dog poop). This would include stenciling reminders on the storm drains. Allison will take the lead in developing a prototype for the signs. Doug volunteered to assist Allison, by connecting her with a group of artists he knows. A second source of pollution is the high concentration of native and non-native ducks in the harbor and on the Megunticook River. This high concentration is caused by people feeding the ducks. This not only harms water quality, but is harmful to the health of the ducks. Kristen will prepare an educational piece on why not to feed the ducks, and, subsequently, the CCC will develop a proposal to submit to the Select Board to discourage or prohibit such feeding.

7) Round the Mountain Collaboration endorsement

Coastal Mountains Land Trust has requested that the Camden Conservation Commission endorse CMLT's Bald & Ragged Mountain Campaign (Round the Mountain Collaboration) to permanently preserve the Maine Water Company's Land on the south side of Ragged Mountain and around Grassy Pond. After a brief presentation by Roger and Kristen, the CCC members present voted 4-0 to endorse the Campaign, with one abstention. There are no financial implications to the Town of Camden from this endorsement.

8) Camden Planning Board request

The Camden Planning Board requested that the CCC Chair review a proposal to convert the top two floors of the Knox Mill Village buildings from office to residential space. Roger did not believe that this proposal would have a significant impact on the surrounding natural environment and that the anticipated increase in water and sewer usage would be addressed by the permitting process.

Next meeting, March 30.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Hopps, Secretary