

# Camden Conservation Commission minutes, meeting of 09/19/12

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## CAMDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes of meeting held September 19, 2012, 7-8:50 PM

### Draft version

PRESENT: members of the Commission: Doug Johnson, Carla Ferguson, Robin Kern, David Kern, Roger Rittmaster

(Excused members: Barbara Melchiskey, John Evrard)

Non-members - Nancy Caudle-Johnson (Tree City USA and Arbor Day coordinator)

Guests: Jeff Kuller – Director, Parks and Recreation/Snow Bowl

Nina Young, Lands Projects, Maine Farmland Trust

Cate Cronin, Campaign Director, Maine Farmland Trust

The meeting, chaired by Doug Johnson, proceeded as follows:

Doug opened the meeting by introducing two guests from Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) – Nina Young, Lands Projects and Cate Cronin, Campaign Director, who presented an overall description of MFT's land acquisitions, methods and goals and a more particular description of the Rokes Egg Farm project and Spear property project. They answered Commission members' questions as to how land was purchased and then sold to farmers, what kind of land MFT acquired and desired, and what were MFT's goals in Maine and specifically in Camden. A picture emerged of a dynamic movement in Maine, and in fact throughout the country, to preserve farmland and bring back farms. Ms. Young and Ms. Cronin enthusiastically agreed to work with the Commission on an October fundraising walk at Rokes Egg Farm, to take place on an October Sunday morning (date yet to be picked). The walk will be combined with a pancake breakfast at the Snow Bowl. Carla Ferguson will work on setting the final date. There will be a press release and the walk will be sponsored by the Commission as a fundraising event. Doug moved that the Commission donate \$500.00 to MFT. After some discussion, the motion carried. Ms. Young and Ms. Cronin left the meeting after their presentation and the ensuing discussion; all those present thanked them greatly for their informative presentation and inspiring work.

The meeting then turned to old business:

-there were corrections to the minutes of the 8/22/12 meeting made by Doug and Nancy Caudle-Johnson. These were discussed briefly and the corrections will be sent to Robin Kern to be put into the final version. This version was accepted;

-the heritage tree project is moving forward, as Nancy and Robin had each prepared a sample tree application/nomination form. These forms were presented and their comparative strengths and

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weaknesses were discussed. Nancy and Robin will work together to harmonize these forms into one. They hope to be able to do so by the next meeting.

Finally, there were two further important items of business:

-Doug and Nancy wrote a letter in support of the Town of Camden's application for a grant for funds to support a Camden River to Harbor Walk. This letter, dated September 14, 2012 and signed by Douglas N. Johnson, Chair, Camden Conservation Commission, was part of the grant proposal. The letter describes the Commission's role in envisioning such a walk and in promoting over the years various components that will form this walk, and affirmed the Commission's continuing support of this project.

-Jeff Kuller announced that the Recreation Trails (RT) program grant for the tannery has been approved and that 900 feet will be completed by next summer.

To end on a wonderful note: Roger Rittmaster mentioned that he had seen at the Snow Bowl large numbers of breeding common buckeye butterflies, which are rarely seen in Maine.

The next meeting of the commission will take place on October 24th.

These minutes are submitted by Robin Kern, secretary, as an accurate representation of the major topics discussed and agreed upon at this meeting.

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September 14, 2012

To Whom It May Concern

The Camden Conservation Commission supports the vision of a Camden River to Harbor Walk and the Town of Camden's application to pursue grant funds so that a full and comprehensive plan can be created.

The purpose of the Commission is to serve as a research, advisory, and advocacy group on environmental and conservation issues related to the town. As such we are committed to preserving and increasing opportunities for public access to shoreland -- protected areas that provide safe, attractive, and welcoming places for people to enjoy, and which contribute to the social, environmental, and economic well being of the community, now and in the future. Therefore, we have a great interest in enhancing Camden's natural assets such as the Megunticook River and Camden Harbor, making them more accessible to Camden residents and visitors.

In 2005, the Commission selected the "protection of Megunticook River frontage whenever feasible" as one of its top two issues, and adopted the following:

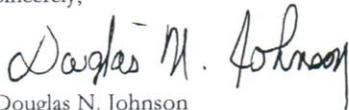
The Camden Conservation Commission considers protecting Megunticook River frontage a high priority because of the potential to:

- 1) Protect ecologically vital vegetative buffers that reduce runoff and pollution from entering the river and the harbor.
- 2) Offer valuable educational resources for teaching the younger generation about the natural world and about Camden's rich historical and cultural heritage associated with the river.
- 3) Provide public access and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- 4) Increase property values in areas within walking distance of green spaces.

In 2007 and 2008, the Commission was instrumental in protecting a portion of the riverfront known as the "Megunticook River walk" and advocating for its permanent preservation by conservation easement. Commission members have been actively involved since then in identifying and removing invasive trees and shrubs in the Megunticook Riverwalk easement area.

Our role in this planning study and in the project's eventual implementation, is completely in sync with the Commission's goals and work. I believe the time is ripe in our town for a Camden River to Harbor Walk to be successful. Not only will the project itself be a tremendous asset by offering a myriad of conservation and environmental gains, but a tangible synergy will be created between town government, staff, and volunteer committees as the details of this project are attended to. This team spirit will no doubt lead to other exciting endeavors to enhance our stature on coastal Maine as a sustainable and vibrant community.

Sincerely,



Douglas N. Johnson  
Chair, Camden Conservation Commission