



TOWN LANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

(Commission)

Town of Cumberland

290 Tuttle Road

Cumberland, ME 04021

Date: November 4, 2021

(** = town manager; * = Chair; + = liaison TC; ++=Code enforcement officer; ^(T) = trails SC; ^(F) = forest SC)
Bill Shane**; Bill Longley ++; Tom Gruber +; Mark Segrist + (abs); Allison Foster+

To: Members:

Jennifer Bell (abs)	Sam York	^(F) Ted Chadbourne	^(T) Shaun Breton
Jenn Grasso	David Young	^(F) Melissa Cott	^(T) Stephen Fitzgerald
Matt Grondin		^(F) *Denny Gallaudet ✓	^(T) *John Jensenius ✓
Ellen Hoffman		^(F) John Leavitt	^(T) Matthew Leclair
John Jensenius ^{vice*}		^(F) Gordon Lichter	^(T) Brian Stearns
Riva Krut		^(F) Linda Putnam	^(T) John Stewart ✓
*Mike Schwindt		^(F) Sally Stockwell	^(T) Don Stowell

Climate Action Subcommittee:

Sukie Curtis, Jennifer Grasso, Jesse Lamarre-Vincent, Denny Gallaudet, Riva Krut, Ivy Frignoca, Mark Segrist

Note: Only members of the Commission and voting members of the subcommittees need attend. “✓” indicates subcommittee member attended Commission meeting.

From: Ellen Hoffman

Re: Meeting November 3, 2021

- October minutes were approved as written. This meeting was held virtually.
- Trees along 295N/Route 1 – Riva mentioned that MDOT will begin planting trees along 295 N and Route 1 to help dampen the noise coming from the road. Different types of trees will be planted over the coming weeks.
- Town Council (Allison)
 - Looking forward to meeting on the 15th with LCC and the Town Council to discuss 2022 priorities, environmental action, and open space plan among other things. Interested in getting thoughts on what appears to be working and what is not. It will be a workshop type environment. Bill S commented it would be helpful if the meeting was structured so all the subcommittees have a say in what topics to discuss and nothing is left out. Mike asked subcommittee chairs to forward list of topics and Mike will compile and distribute a comprehensive list prior to the 15th.
 - Budget – a previous meeting was held with Tom, Mark and Bill S from Town Council and Mike, John and Denny of LCC to discuss budgeting and how to plug LCC into the budgeting process.
- Commission (Mike)
 - Bill report (Bill L and summarized from Bill L’s notes):
 - During the month of October 2021, 26 permits were issued for a variety of structures such as: pools, sheds, decks, renovations, additions, and solar installations.



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- OceanView Phase I (Tuttle Rd) under construction; 33 permits have been issued.
 - Christmas Creek – under construction; 19 building permits issued.
 - Orchard Rd - Cortland Court – six building permits issued.
 - Blanchard Oaks – Off Blanchard Road Ext. has begun tree clearing and road construction is underway. Lots to be sold or made for sale soon.
 - Planning Board meeting scheduled for November has no business.
 - Items to be addressed in future Planning Board meeting:
 - Storey Brothers annual pit approval off Blackstrap/ Goose Pond
 - Coastal Landscaping proposed changes at Middle Road location
 - New school building for MSAD51 (maybe)
 - Denny questioned the status of the conservation easement for Blanchard Oaks. Bill S – working with attorney for wording on issue of public easement, permitted uses of open space, snowmobile trail, motorized vehicles prohibited. First conservation subdivision, would like to use easement as template in the future.
- Budget (Mike) – LCC as a budget of \$20,000 set aside for us (we did not request this). If a project requires money, should be discussed in upcoming meeting and a recommendation can be made to the Town Council. People’s time should also be considered (such as Judy or Paul L).
 - Project Canopy (Denny) - \$6,000 was granted to complete management plans for Knights Pond and newly acquired sections of Rines Forest. The plans have been completed and currently in review. The management plans have answered a lot of questions concerning invasive plants and the rate of carbon sequestration. Paul L will compile a written report which will also be sent to Project Canopy. These documents are helpful and information can be shared with other towns. Denny will work with Matt to get the plans on the Town Website.
 - Hybrid meeting policy (Mike) – prior to Monday’s 11/15 workshop with Town Council, there will be a brief meeting to vote on remote meeting policy. Riva had added wording to make more up to date and suggested the changes be put back into the original template. Basically stressing the flexibility of need to hold a remote meeting, not only during a pandemic.
 - Snow Dog (Knight’s Pond) - In a previous meeting, LCC voted to allow Snow Dog grooming on one trail in Knight’s Pond for a year as an experiment. After further discussion, the Forestry Subcommittee wanted to rescind the vote.
 - Riva made motion to reconsider the use of snow dog grooming at Knight’s Pond, Sam seconded. (See Sally’s memo below.)
 - Members of the Forestry Subcommittee believe there are a lot of competing uses for the trails in Knight’s Pond and the forest is under a lot of pressure. They believe it will be harder to remove the grooming once started and people get used to it.



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- Trail subcommittee voted 4 to 2 in favor of rescinding approval. John said there are valid concerns but are they really valid? How to evaluate public opinion?
- Bill S mentioned we need to let other interested parties (snowmobile club) know about possible changes in a public hearing. He said we should not vote tonight and put issue back on table with other interested parties present to give them opportunity to participate in discussion.
- John mentioned concern of damage to Yellow Trail which is very steep.
- Sam suggested give grooming a try but have right to review during the season instead of at the end of the season.
- Denny said that there is an agenda item for the Joint Standing Committee to vote on the Snow Dog trials. They need to know where LCC stands on this issue.
- Riva – after seeing Sally’s email, she reverses her stand, saying that it was a rush decision without enough information.
- Sam made motion to reconsider earlier motion to rescind, put back on agenda to reconsider original decision and put other groups on notice. Jenn G seconded, passed 8/2.

MEMO

To: Conservation Commission
From: Forestry Subcommittee
Re: Snow Dogs at Knight’s Pond
Date: 6 October 2021

Last summer, The Forestry Subcommittee of the Cumberland Conservation Commission walked the trails to review options for forest management and recreational trail activity. During that walk, we also discussed the request from a few folks to do a trial run of using Snow Dogs to groom several of the trails at Knight’s Pond this coming winter. In general, most committee members were opposed to the idea. We noted serious concerns about grooming some of the trails for the following reasons:

- Bikers are already using Knight’s Pond trails in the winter without groomed trails.
- We noted there are plenty of other options in the area for bikers who want a groomed trail experience and we don’t need to offer that at Knight’s Pond as well. Those who want a packed trail at Knight’s Pond can already use the snowmobile trail.
- Several neighbors who are avid fat tire bikers and frequently bike at Knight’s Pond told one of us they would not like to see groomed trails at Knight’s Pond – they can go elsewhere for that experience if they want.
- We are concerned about potential dangerous and adverse interactions between fast-riding bicyclists and slow-moving walkers and snowshoers, especially on some of the curves and steep slopes, and especially as more people become familiar with Knight’s Pond trails.
- We are concerned about how the motorized activity and noise will affect people who are looking for a quiet experience out in nature.
- We are concerned about how the motorized activity and noise will affect wildlife, especially during winter when they are already stressed.
- We don’t want to encourage more motorized activities at Knight’s Pond – there are plenty of other places where that is already allowed, and relatively few places where motorized activities are restricted.
- We also wondered whether or not motorized uses are even allowed under the conservation easement, although we have heard that the language is not terribly clear on this and open to interpretation (we have not checked the easement).



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- However, The Knight's Pond Management Plan that has been adopted by the Towns of Cumberland and North Yarmouth clearly states that the use of unauthorized motor vehicles, motorized watercrafts, and ATVs are prohibited because they could disturb wildlife and habitat; generate unwanted noise; cause accidental injury and property damage; and are prohibited except in designated areas. Snowmobiles are allowed only on the designated snowmobile trail.

We realize the Conservation Commission has already approved a trial use of Snow Dogs, however we would like to ask the Commission to reconsider this recommendation and deny the request for the reasons stated above. If the Commission is not interested in doing so, the Forestry Subcommittee will likely submit a minor report to the Joint Standing Committee that oversees management issues for the Preserve whenever they take up this issue.

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- Recreational Trails Subcommittee - (John and taken from John's notes)
 - John noted that all trails, bridges, and walkways survived the most recent storms. Several areas in Greely Woods were under standing water after the storm but have subsequently dried out.
 - Rines Forest
 - The Trails Subcommittee cleared, marked and hardened the new trail that connects the Snowmobile Trail to the future parking area. The trails runs parallel to Range Road and will provide a more direct route for bikers travelling through Rines Forest. It will also eliminate the need for people to walk in the roadway to get from the parking lot to the Snowmobile Trail. More hardening will likely be needed next year.
 - Steve is making plans to extend the new 76 ft. walkway at least another 24 ft. across the wet area on the trail leading from the future parking lot.
 - Plans are to change trail color signage to provide consistent "through trail" colors, to mark currently unmarked trails, and to have the Loop Trail pass through the future parking lot. These changes will be coordinated with CCLT to ensure consistency with both printed and posted maps. The changes are expected to occur late this fall or next spring.
 - The Town purchased trail markers in an additional three colors. This will eliminate the need to use duplicate colors on the trails in Rines Forest.
 - Greely Woods
 - The Blue Trail leading from the parking area was hardened in numerous locations.
 - Broad Cove/Spears Hill Trail
 - CCLT is still working out issues with the homeowners in the area. Once these issues have been resolved, a trail sign will be posted at the entrance to the trail in Broad Cove.
 - Knight's Pond



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- The Trails Subcommittee and CCLT would like the Joint Standing Committee (JSC) to streamline procedures when it comes to maintenance and construction of trails in Knight's Pond. The subcommittee will propose standards to be used for trail construction and maintenance. If approved, the Subcommittee would like to simply follow these standards rather than getting approval from the JSC for every construction or maintenance issues. The Joint Standing Committee will be meeting November 10th.
- There are three specific requests for construction and /or maintenance at Knight's Pond.
 - Construct a short walkway across wet areas on southeast side of the pond.
 - Relocate the White Trail on the northwest side of the pond farther away from the edge of the pond.
 - Construct a walkway across the wet area near the top of Blueberry Hill.
- Forest and Natural Resources Subcommittee (Denny)
 - Knights Pond.
 - Subcommittee meeting was conducted as a site walk at Knight's Pond. Purpose of walk was to inspect the eroded portion of Greely Road Ext. from the end of the paved roadway to the crest of the ridge. Over the years, foot traffic and erosion have resulted in three separate pathways. Each of them is substantially eroded but still heavily used by walkers, bikers and snowmobilers.
 - None of the paths are adequate for entrance of vehicles that could be used to haul logs/chips resulting from future wood harvests. There does appear to be room at the crest for a landing from which skidders or forwarders could be operated for a harvest.
 - The Subcommittee will be in contact with Public Works to determine how to upgrade this stretch of road to accommodate logging trucks.
 - Rines Forest – Buckthorn removal party this weekend.
- Climate Action Subcommittee (Riva/Denny)
 - Climate Action Plan – Phase 2. A climate action survey was mailed to 50 or so businesses in Town that had provided email addresses on the Town's business directory. Only six responses have been received so far, likely too small to be representative of the business sector in Cumberland. According to the Maine Department of Labor, the Town of Cumberland has 309 business establishments with 1,292 employees and a payroll of over \$83,000,000.
 - Riva discussed using a step down approach to get the total Town footprint to zero. Break down action items into smaller doable steps so not so overwhelming. Communication is a big part of this goal. How to do better? Need a simple common template for each action item so will be easier for residence to read and understand. Simple steps residence can do to make a difference.
 - Riva discussed the upcoming Crier article which features support of EVs by Police Chief Rumsey. There will be a link to article on subcommittee webpage on the Town's website.
 - Allison – How can Town help in communication? Information needs to be bite size to be more digestible.



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- Denny has fielded queries from library about climate outreach. Denny will meet this week with Thomas Bennett PML director and one of the librarians to discuss.
 - Allison mentioned that the MSAD51 Green Committee has a meeting on November 15th regarding community solar projects.
- Invasive plants (Sam)
 - Phragmites and buckthorn sprayed in Town Forest early September.
 - Open Season
 - Mike - Foreside Garden Club has donated \$200 towards bird and bee houses at the BFG.
 - Bill S mentioned that aerial photos of the Town Forest should be back this month to be used for the new maps.
 - Eagle Scout project to construct possibly eight kiosks.
 - Matt – Public information – some changes to Town website. Now working with Whitney. Would be nice to put a story about the tree plantings taking place alongside 295N with some photos.
 - Farmland assessment (Dave) – No update
 - Next meeting December 1st, 2021 - 7:00 PM.