

ARROWSIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

December 22, 2021

Present: Phine Ewing (Chair), Jesse McMahon, Clarke Cooper, Paul Schlein, Pricilla Tucker, Karen Robbins

1. The virtual meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM
2. The minutes of the October 19, 2021 meeting were unanimously accepted as amended.
3. Mail: Brett, the Town Treasurer asked for payment approval to HETL for water quality samples
4. Salt Water Access: A) Paul updated the Commission on communications with the Coast regarding the pending availability of the Light Keepers property at the Range Lights. It was noted that the one-acre property is accessed by a driveway that is within a 14-foot access easement across the abutters land. It is currently unclear where the property boundary lines are and whether the easement would transfer with the property and allow for the public uses being contemplated. Karen will ask Lisa Holley for assistance in obtaining the recorded deeds in an effort to answer these questions. Phine noted that the December 28th Selectman's meeting is scheduled to address waterfront access and asked any interested Commission members to attend to encourage Select Board support for the waterfront access project. B) Since the existing Comprehensive Plan charges the Conservation Commission with water front access for Arrowsic residents, it has been proposed that the Commission host a registry of property owners that might be willing to allow their neighbors water access across their property. All agreements would be directly between the property owners and private individuals. C) The Commission is wondering if there are specific needs that residents have for salt water access and discussed several ways to obtain feedback and direction from the Town. There is general agreement that a survey of households would be informative. To that end, Paul and Karen will write an article for the next Arrow that will review the history of activities regarding salt water access so current residents have an understanding of Commission actions. The article will also solicit reader (resident, property owner) feedback.
5. Picture Post Project: The last king tide of the fall season was earlier this month. Clarke reported that volunteers are becoming more proficient with the documentation protocols and associated technologies. A tide gage was installed at the Mill Island monitoring station. While Jesse and Clarke were installing the gage, they had a conversation with a resident and found him to be supportive of the project. The stakes installed by MDOT along Route 127 this fall are part of a survey MDOT is doing of coastal roads. They are collecting baseline data with which to set project and budget priorities for infrastructure modifications that will be required to respond to sea level rise.
6. SPCAMP: Wood chips have been delivered to the Conservation area for application next spring.

7. Comprehensive Plan and Resilience Plan: Phine is encouraging Commissioners to keep the Comprehensive Plan in their minds. She reached out to Phippsburg regarding their experience with the Climate Change Resiliency pilot program; neither of the co-chairs had information about the program. It is assumed that some other department in Phippsburg worked on the project. Harpswell's plan is posted online. Phine will be attending a workshop in January sponsored by the Southern Midcoast Maine Social Resilience Project. Its purpose is to strengthen connections among emergency management, conservation, social service, and municipal services of municipalities within our region.
8. Nature Notes: Phine reported her first frost was November 3rd. She has no record of the first hard frost as she was out of town for the second half of November. Jesse and Karen reported harvesting tomatillos and tomatoes into the first week of November. Jesse saw a rainbow over Sewall Pond toward the end of today's rain event. Phine described seeing what she thought was a woodchuck then realizing it was a barred owl on the ground before it flew off; she hopes it was hunting mice or voles in her garden. Pricilla reported seeing what she has determined to be two fishers near house earlier this month. Paul reported seeing a weasel. It was in the middle its seasonal color change, the white stood out against the fall leaf litter. Weasel color change is triggered by length of daylight not temperature. A general discussion of climate change and its impacts on predator/prey relationships ensued. Clarke noted that Maine's weather is getting more and more like Seattle's weather each year.
9. Other: None was discussed.
10. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:18PM.
11. Meetings will be conducted virtually until physical distancing recommendations are lifted. The next meeting will be January 18, 2022 at 5PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Robbins, Acting Secretary