

ARROWSIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

February 15, 2022

Present: Phine Ewing (Chair), Clarke Cooper, Jesse McMahon, Priscilla Tucker, Karen Robbins, Lisa Holley, Karin Stadler, Michael Kreindler,

1. The virtual meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM.
2. The minutes of the January 18, 2022 meeting were unanimously accepted as amended.
3. Mail: As of this morning there was no mail.
4. Climate Resilience Project: Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP), in collaboration with the New England Environmental Finance Center have applied for a Service Provider Grant through the Community Resilience Partnership the granting arm of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF). They propose to work with Midcoast municipalities to help identify community and regional needs, and develop implementation strategies to respond to climate change. The Commission understands the needs for such planning and agreed to participate. Phine emailed the signed Select Board's letter of support needed for the grant proposal to CBEP. At that time, she was told that Woolwich, Westport Island, Phippsburg, and Georgetown had also provided letters of support. Phine suggested that even if the grant application is unsuccessful, we reconvene the Consortium of Conservation Commissions plus Woolwich and proceed with the project.
5. Salt Water Access: Phine checked the GSA website morning. The Range Light Keepers house is not listed as available yet. The Commission asked Realtor Lisa Holley many questions about the reasonableness of further encumbering the property with public access and then selling the property as residential. Lisa spoke about the current state of the real estate market and how past comps are not a reliable prediction of current sales or selling conditions. She also said she would be unable to guess a price because she doesn't know the details of the property. She told the Commission that Maine State law requires that residential water be potable, private septic be in good operating condition, that known property defects be reported, and that any known property hazards be reported. Her experience is that the government will provide all that documentation when the property's availability is published. She also said that there are several approaches that the GSA has taken in the past. The auction could be a closed bid by date certain. Alternatively, it could be a paced bid closed based on the government's target price. She thinks the property is fairly encumbered and at the same time, in this market, might be considered a "golden opportunity" for someone. There was some discussion as to whether the town as a municipality could have first right of refusal. In general, the Commission thought holding right of first refusal would allow for the time needed to make an offer if the property did in fact meet the needs of the Town. Phine will reach out to Paul's contacts at the GSA to determine if they would be willing and able to receive such a request. If so, the Commission will ask the Selectboard to make the official request for the Town.

6. Arrow Salt Water Access Article: Jesse will make final edits and it will be submitted to the Arrow for publication in the next Arrow. Submissions are due March 7th.
7. Stewardship Guide: Phine went through the guide and found one quarter to a third of the links are broken as well as a few factual errors such as different individuals doing various town jobs. Karen will ask Ruth if she knows how to fix broken links and to change details of fact.
8. Roadside Clean-up: How to approach the task this year was discussed. Should it be individuals working at their own time and own pace such as the approach used the past two years. Or should it be more of a community activity, conducted on one chosen Saturday out of the Town Hall as it was done pre-COVID. Pros and cons to each approach were discussed. Clarke offered to help with the organization. Phine will check with the Recycling Committee as to their preference of day and involvement.
9. Alewives: It was decided to set up the stop trap this season and to reach out to towns people to see if they want to help with the monitoring effort. Karen will reach out to Theo Willis to see if he has any recommendations for a less volunteer intense monitoring method that would give reliable results for projecting the total run. If possible, volunteers will use both methods this season to confirm the appropriateness for the Sewall Pond run.
10. Nature Notes: After not being seen for several weeks, the Stellars sea eagle was seen in the Back River corridor. Phine saw it several times from her house and it was seen from the Georgetown-Arrowsic bridge. Birders abound.



Karen

reported seeing from IF &W land many different species of water fowl on the Back River: American black duck, Canada geese, 2 adult bald eagles, long-tailed ducks, buffleheads, hooded mergansers, red-breasted mergansers, and golden eye. Phine saw a juvenile golden eagle from the Georgetown-Arrowsic bridge and had a tom turkey in full display the day before Valentine's Day and thought "you're a bit early."

Priscilla heard a lot of raucous crows this morning at her house and when she checked it out, saw a golden eagle. She also had a short-tailed weasel with a white winter coat come right up to her house and stare at her dog. Jesse has had a hermit thrush at her bird feeder since the ice storm. She is enjoying its delicate and beautiful sound. Clarke is hearing the coyotes again although he hasn't seen any other evidence of their presence.

Paul sent his nature notes from away.

And ***the tale of the little mouse that could***, can only be shared unedited: As the car that took us to the Portland Jetport was pulling up to the drop-off point near the large revolving door at 4:45 a.m., the driver, looking toward the shrubbery at the edge of the sidewalk, exclaimed "Look, a mouse!" I looked, but didn't expect to see anything. Low and behold, a mouse darted out, dashing, most deliberately, along the pavement. With numerous cars letting people off, all heading for that door, the mouse (or was it a vole, questioned Mona, and it may well have been), with a clear destination in mind, stopped at the outer edge of the fast-spinning door, where the upright frame and door constantly meet--a veritable guillotine, I thought. "Crazy, absolute madness," I said to myself. "There's no way it will survive."

The mouse waited, carefully observing, ready to spring at the optimum moment. And then, suddenly, with split-second timing, it dashed around the corner of the doorframe, right into a section of the door, behind two people that had just entered, running ahead of the door, as it quickly turned. And then it was gone, into that vast cavernous structure and the unknown. No one else had noticed this little being and, hopefully, no one would.

Its mission, in entering this most inhospitable environment? Oh, it has to be all those lovely crumbs and morsels of food strewn everywhere, embedded in the carpet and under the benches, just waiting to be consumed! *Un repas raffiné*.

The three of us, all at the same time, laughed, marveled, and stared in disbelief at what we had just observed. Never, ever, would I have guessed, except perhaps in some dream world, or a children's book, that a tiny, oh-so-vulnerable mouse would do, with such precision, what it had done. Was this the first time or was this a daily routine? I suspect the latter.

During an additional nature notes discussion Priscilla agreed to learn about various citizen science web sites such as iNaturalist and will share her findings.

11. Other: MMA is hosting a three-part series on brown-tailed moth, emerald ash borer and vernal pools. Members had interest in one part but not another so Phine will find out if the Conservation Commission can share an attendance slot. A slot costs \$45.
12. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:23PM.
13. Meetings will be conducted virtually until physical distancing recommendations are lifted. The next meeting will be March 15, 2022 at 5PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Robbins, Acting Secretary

