

Town of Arrowsic

Planning Board Meeting

June 4, 7 PM

In-person and Via Zoom

Attendees: Vicky Stoneman (PB Chair), Joe Bonnett (PB), Paul Cunningham (PB), Jenna Howard (PB, alt Secretary), Pia Nelson (homeowner), John Riley (homeowner), John Wood (surveyor), and an additional 25 community members in-person. KELT Land & Stewardship Director Andrew Morgan and KELT Executive Director Becky Kolak joined as guests. By Zoom: Mike Field (CEO) Jim Davis (PB) and 14 community members online.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Reskehegan Wildlife Preserve Presentation

- Andrew Morgan, Land & Stewardship Director at KELT began a visual presentation to share updates with the community about the ongoing project and the expected land use at Reskehegan Wildlife Preserve. He works on all land acquisition projects with Becky Kolak and KELT Board Member Jack Witham of Arrowsic. The organization's mission is to conserve the Kennebec Estuary through ownership and easements totaling 5000 acres across 9 towns. Their land trust operates with a focus on transparency. Andrew notes that KELT originally started through the Arrowsic Conservation Commission.
- Today KELT holds 3 easements and 1 preserve in Arrowsic which includes the Reskehegan property. KELT has been the easement holder with local property owner Judy Kahrl for about a decade. The property includes 460+ acres, including 76 acres of tidal marsh home to many natural communities. It is in the rural residential 2 district with much of it in special protection and resource protection districts.
- The Reskehegan property includes 3.5 miles undeveloped shoreline and touts the highest elevation in Arrowsic. Newtown Creek is home to the endangered Salt Marsh Sparrow.
- By a show of hands, Andrew asks residents if they use this land for recreation. With a large show of hands, he acknowledges there is preexisting usage by locals. Following Judy's vision for the property, preserving wildlife will come first and low-impact recreation will be a priority. There will be several sections of existing trails

closed off from the open reserve trails due to buffer zones around 2 private residences. They will be marked with “no going beyond” signs. There will be a trail created down to the southern point on the Back River and another trail created for northern water access on the Back River. KELT will raise funds to build a parking lot off Bald Head Road in 2 years or so. A new trail will be created to join to an existing trail, making for a new entrance to the Preserve.

- Sustainable trail design will work with the trail and land, instead of against it. The southern route is fully flagged, and work has begun; a new trail 1.6 mile in and out from field, with two water views is the first project. Accessibility will be a focus. Finished tread will be 18 up to 24” with grades of 3-10%. One bridge will be built by cedar trees on the property with ledge to anchor. Permit by rule is deemed not necessary by KELT. Vicky Stoneman asks if they’ve confirmed with DEP. Andrew has not talked to DEP as it is not meeting that threshold. He notes the alternative route is key to easement and landowners. This trail should be accessible in 2026.
- Another trail off the main walking trail to Lost Pond and out to a more northern section of the Back River for the view will be completed by Fall of 2027 and perhaps sooner.
- From parking lot, a trail would connect at the first hill of the existing main walking trail with some blended gravel for user experience.
- The existing gravel road will get fill as needed. The prior land manager, Jeff, is currently mowing as he did for Judy.
- The last piece Andrew describes is a new feature, a shoreline trail in the cliffs. The trail would be 18-24” wide using hand-building and provide views of Marsh and Packard’s Landing, Back River.
- Jokingly, Mike McMahon jokes that Karen Robbins need to be more careful with turtles after the turtle photo at the end of the presentation.

Parking and Land Use Details

- Andrew shows the ordinance he believes their property would fall under, 3.22 Public and Private Parks and Rec Area (6-13-19) when the parking lot is added.
- A conditional use permit will be needed from the Arrowsic Planning Board for a parking lot. The location KELT has identified is 150 feet in from Bald Head Rd. It requires creating a driveway and lot area and taking down 16 or so trees. It is 80 x 60 feet of usable space, on par with most used preserves. It would fit 8-10 vehicles. This additional infrastructure would completely dependent on funding.
- Pia Nielson asks how much is needed to raise. Andrew and Becky estimated \$30-50,000 for parking lot and \$10-20,000 more for the driveway connecting to Bald

Head, so an estimated \$60-70,000 in total. KELT's only parking lot larger is Thorne Head Preserve.

- Vicky Stoneman asks about parking in the interim. Andrew notes a sign on gate outlines temporary guidelines including parking for 2-3 cars on either side of the gate, not to block the gate, and that the public route is from gate to field.
- Ken Hnottavange-Telleen comments that new folks need to know where field is. Andrew says a map is in the works for posting. Vicky Stoneman asks if there will be a "no walking beyond" sign near the Galuza's property as well. There will be one placed there at some point soon.

Questions

- Phine Ewing asks how many cars: up to 8 cars. If an engineer feels it could go bigger, they may. That's on par with all most popular preserves. In-decline hemlock trees will be milled on property if they need to be cut.
- This property is on a "slow open", so currently not on KELT's guide, webpage, or google maps. But KELT membership and this Arrowsic announcement have been made to inform a limited number of community people. KELT notes the proactive piece is setting expectations now.
- Ros Arienti asks if trails will be skiable. Andrew says the northern trail loop will be tailored for skiing, but skiing is permissible on all trails. This loop will likely not be completed until 2028. Next year, there will be more refining of the trail which leads out to the loop. Volunteer work date each week now, 9:15-Noon Wednesdays carpooling from town hall.
- Andrew Morgan offers to walk there with neighboring Rhonda Adlam who lives across from property to show her the potential parking area and trail plans.
- Karen Dowell asks if there will be a map at the parking lot. Andrew answers Yes. Bob Ater asks what the privy situation would be. Andrew says there will be no privy. KELT maintains no other bathroom facility on any property as it invites more trash. All KELT properties are strictly carry-in, carry-out. Further, the easement strictly prohibits a privy.
- Pia Neilson asks How can KELT be owner and easement holder; wouldn't one cancel the other out? Andrew notes the easement runs with the land, it can not be extinguished even when they are the landowners.
- Ros Arienti asks if trapping will still happen here. Andrew says KELT takes a full year to do a full management plan. She asks if there is trapping, could KELT note with signs? Andrew says yes. Vicky Stoneman asks if there is a concern of flooding (from beaver population) unless you trap. Andrew says not necessarily.

- Karen Dowell asks since the priority is to protect habitat, how does KELT deal with dogs? Andrew says the policy will allow dogs on-leash, same for all preserves (except some that prohibit dogs.)
- Bob Ater asks what KELT's policy is on time-of-use and hunting. Andrew notes the property can be accessed dawn to dusk. There will be hunting allowed. The trails will determine where hunting can be done safely. They expect a 75-foot buffer around trails, and that some areas might be bow-hunting only. Permission would be granted by KELT. Specific zones would be provided. Vicky Stoneman asks if there is a timeline and if KELT would limit the number: Generally they give a calendar year's permission. KELT has not denied permission to hunt in the past. Mike McMahon says hunters tend to hunt well outside the area that would be trails currently.
- PB Member Joe Bonnett notes that Arrowsic has a small volunteer fire department who responds when someone gets hurt. Will the property be mapped with GPS coordinates? Is it possible to get a UTV? In case there is emergency, he notes it is not fun to haul someone out a mile. KELT agrees to provide a key for emergency vehicles to get through the gate and onto the road and field like they do at other preserves. Joe asks what KELT does with other towns on emergency plans. Andrew says Bath's 5+ mile trail has a plan with emergency use tags. For other towns, they supply GIS level maps. Once the trail is laid out, emergency teams could walk it with the KELT experts. Hose could get water from dam area. Since Arrowsic does mutual aid with Georgetown and Woolwich, they would be invited to walk with them, too.
- Jamie Hunt: Skiable loop to the far east or south east? Andrew: No. Tarr Mountain is wildlife habitat, the topography is difficult for ski trails. Nathan Andrews asks about where Tarr Mountain is. Mike McMahon weighs in Tarr Mountaintop location on map.
- Karen Dowell asks if ATVs, 4-wheelers and dirt bikes will be permitted. Andrew says no and connects to game warden if there are any issues.
- Community members are invited to leave the meeting once this topic is complete.

Review of Neilson/Coughlin-Riley CUP Application

- The Planning Board visited the site at 5:30pm ahead of the meeting.
- In their own words, the homeowners explain why the changes are being requested. Pia Neilson shares that she got in touch with neighbor John Riley to ask if they could clean up the property lines before the Riley/Coughlins sell their property so the Neilson lot was cleaner with ownership of the full pond. The neighbors said they were happy to. Their home is now on the market.

- PB Member Jim Davis asks what is happening to top triangle, parcel A. The Neilsons would gain both “triangles” and the roads are explained. Pia believes the land was subdivided into lots and then the road was added later.
- The Planning Board asked for the CUP materials because this organizes it and gives all the relevant documentation needed to make a determination on a revision of a subdivision plan. The use of the land is not changing, according to homeowners. Vicky notes that according to 8.44 of the Arrowsic Subdivision Ordinance that it is necessary for the Planning Board to review this revision, so it is the jurisdiction of the PB. Town lawyer reviewed the ordinance and confirmed this. John Wood asks if the Planning Board reviews all subdivision changes and recalls that ten years ago the board agreed on the (Karen) “Robbins rule, once a subdivision always a subdivision” so in that way, all changes in a subdivision are always reviewed by the PB. He suggests the PB should make it clear that this review is necessary for subdivision changes.
- Conditions reviewed and all approved.
- Joe Bonnett makes a motion that we approve the changes to the subdivision. Paul Cunningham seconds. All in favor.
- Vicky Stoneman will make a copy of permit for Mike and each landowner. All board members present in person sign the survey. John Wood will file the signed survey with the County.

Approval of May Minutes

Motion to approve as written by Joe Bonnett, seconded by Paul Cunningham. There is no further discussion. All are in favor.

CEO Update

- A permit was issued for Ron Ellwell 768 Arrowsic Rd, earth filling.
- An Accessory Structure was approved for the Johnsons, 44 Sasanoa Road.
- Garrett Finney has recently purchased 86 Arrowsic Rd. and intends to design a home on posts. He is concerned with MDOT’s roadraising and culvert plans for Arrowsic Rd (Rt. 127) and is making an argument that property flooding issues may result. He may request the ability to raise his home higher, without the volume counting against him regarding the living space size. Jenna asks if other towns are considering this. Mike says Georgetown doesn’t use volume, they use footprint and they can go up an additional two feet if they’re in a floodplain. The flood map today does not include this property’s footprint. Vicky Stoneman and Mike Field will meet with him on Monday.

Announcements and Admin

- Jim's term is renewing until 2031. He is happy to serve!
- We need a new Planning Board alternate. Vicky asks for ideas. We will open it up to town.

Motion to Adjourn made by Joe at 9:01. Seconded by Paul. All in favor.

Next Meeting is scheduled for July 2, 2026, at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Howard.