



TOWN OF HARPSWELL

HARPSWELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025 4:30 PM
APPROVED MINUTES

Open Meeting at 4:37

Roll Call: Mary Ann Nahf, Jenny Zagariello, Jamie Hark, Tony Barrett, Anne Caldwell, Abby Roche, Nancy West, and Wendy Batson, Sel. Jane Covey, Abby Westberry and George Barker, guests

Absent: Deirdre Strachan

Approval of 12/05 minutes: Will include next month.

John Gilliam Day Cleanup. George Barker, a member of the Recycling Committee, is coordinating the John Gilliam Day clean-up and seeking to institutionalize responsibilities. He is considering expanding the roadside clean-up from Tuesday, April 22nd, Earth Day with trash pickup on Saturday. The Recreation Committee would put articles in the Anchor and produce posters. HCC will hang posters and deliver goodie bags.

Other issues: 1. Storm debris. Harpswell had a problem in that storm debris was mixed with household-derived debris with the mix accepted as a singular event. We need a policy to separate those two needs. 2. Coastal and marine cleanup. A fall event with Marine Resources Committee, the Harbormaster, HCC, Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT). Last year, the amount overwhelmed available staff. How to handle storm debris like docks and how can residents clean out coves of stuff that floats up? Can there be a way to dump it for free? Marine cleanup can count as a “conservation date” for harvesters. 3. In general, enhance and centralize communication about what to do with trash and storm debris.

Annual report: Will be due at the end of the month. Abby R. will pull content from minutes. Mary Ann will send last year’s report to all. Topics discussed: WaterWise series, Roads, working with private roads.

Maine Sustainability and Water Conference: Abby drafted an abstract that has been modified and submitted. If it’s selected, Jenny, Nancy, and Mary Ann will present March 27 in Augusta. Carol White and Jessie Meeks convene our session. Jenny noted: “A lot of people look to Harpswell as a leader.”

Meeting with Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP): Matt Craig will present on invasive phragmites at the next meeting. He worked with us on Long Reach Lane and Apple Tree marsh to increase tidal flushing. Phragmites is rampant in both places. How big a problem is phragmites around town? How to proceed? How to manage while abiding by our pesticide ordinance? Wendy has reached out to Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership, HHLT, and Mitchell Field committees. Tony asked if the spread is a consequence of culvert opening? Jaimie said that it’s easily drownable, that more water could be preventative, and that it’s a national issue. If nothing else, it provides some vegetative services. Jaime suggested www.greatlakesphragmites.net/ as a resource.

Nancy and Mary Ann will bake something.

Private Road Associations outreach: How might we provide information? Harpswell has done assessments on all five town roads that will be affected by 1 to 2 feet of sea level rise (SLR). We have asked for funds for new maps that marry SLR with FEMA flood mapping and will hear by April about funding of the nine-month study. All projects so far have been at stream crossings. The new maps might show that roads themselves will have problems due to SLR.

We have been putting up sign-up sheets to acquire private road associations contact info. CBEP has an RFP now that would be open to private road associations. Mary Ann noted that five or six private roads will be affected by 1 - 2' of SLR, but we don't even know if there is a road association on those roads. We have a list from 2016 of roads that will be affected by 6' of SLR.

Wendy: Should they be taking pictures to have a record of problems for applying for grants? Were they, for instance, flooded in the January storms? A more immediate problem may come from the road subsurface not freezing. Engineering assumes substrate frozen between November and March.

Jaimie suggesting mapping out salt or fresh water marshes that intersect roads, a GIS-solvable problem.

WaterWise

Two programs: One with Jaimie on erosion control, including smaller projects using natural vegetation in landscaping. Abby R suggested a demonstration project on public land. Might be able to get NOAA funds from Maine. Build, monitor, educate like Little Diamond Island did near their ferry terminal. Focus on a project that will be useful for average home owners—not like the high bluff at Mitchell field. Jane suggested Clark Cove with its small bluff and erosion problems.

The other presentation: Plantings, but not focusing on invasive plants. HIPP collaboration about using native plants that are easy to grow? April? Advertise at Town Meeting.

New Business

Jenny: Keep people engaged with news flashes like 1) the EPA regarding PFAS or 2) the crash of the brown-tailed moths' population. (Yay!). Put the newsflashes on the website and Facebook.

Jaime: The Envision Resilience challenge, a funded design studio for “built-environment” university students on adaptation, resilience, and affordable housing, will come to Brunswick, Bath, and Harpswell this fall. The Executive Director will meet soon to talk with Jaimie and will return in early February to meet with Harpswell people. An exhibit of Portland work opens at the Portland Public Library February. 7th.

Adjourn: at 6:10.

Nancy West, scribe.

Upcoming meeting dates: 1/29, 2/5 & 2/19