



TOWN OF HARPSWELL

HARPSWELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

Open Meeting: 4:34 PM

Roll Call Present: Mary Ann Nahf, Jenny Zagariello, Jamie Hark, Tony Barrett, Deirdre Strachan, Anne Caldwell, Nancy West, Wendy Batson, Sel. Jane Covey, Planner, Margaret McIntire, Abby Westberry

Absent: Abby Roche

Guest: Kira Chown

- **Introduction:** Mary Ann Nahf introduced guest Kira Cown, a senior at Waynflete School, who attended the meeting as an observer to see how our commission functions. She is taking an environmental class that requires research into the role civil society plays on environmental issues.
- **Approval of 1/29 and 2/9 minutes:** 1/29/2025 and 2/5/2025 minutes were approved with small corrections.
- **Announcements:**

Nancy West reported that neighbor Dana H., attending a meeting last night on the engineer report on two town roads subject to flooding complimented HCC: “nice job to you and the committee.” Nancy suggested that HCC could mount a gauge on the north side of Dingley Bridge close to the picture post to mark the high flood level. Alternatively, HCC could mark the picture post pole itself or the road bed.
- **Town meeting tabling planning:**
 - **Handouts for Town Meeting.**

HCC is preparing two handouts to distribute at town meeting: a one-pager on resource protection that explains what it is and why valuable and a water saving handout taken from material we already have. Both need work to finalize.

Water saving copy: **Nancy West will finish.**

Resource protection copy: **Jenny & Mary Ann will finalize copy.**

Once the drafts are completed, Jamie Hark will format and make them both look good.

In general, members commented on “Preserving the best parts of your property.” The draft needs to better explain why mini wetlands and vernal pools matter and that their protection should not be seen as a loss of control over private property. Members agree this needs further exploration.
 - **Sustainability Café.** Abby Westberry volunteers as a sustainability coordinator at Curtis Memorial Library’s Sustainability Café, where she answers questions from the general public. She offered to set up such a café at town meeting based on this model between

9:00 to 10:00. Abby has the material needed. Mary Ann will check with Cathy to see how much space HCC can have.

- **Shoreline Zoning Workshop.** Margaret McIntire shared an e-mail from Jeff Kalinich, ME Department of Environmental Protection's Shoreline Zoning Coordinator. He is willing to offer a workshop on shoreline zoning for the Planning Board and HCC. Possible dates are the morning or early afternoon of March 4/5/6 or 11/12/13. The workshop will be recorded and streamed. HCC expressed interest in participating.
- [Maine Sustainability and Water Conference](#) . The Maine Sustainability and Water Conference will take place on March 27, 2025 in Augusta. Abby and Jamie are both presenting. The link for conference has the agenda and workshop offerings. HCC members Wendy, Ann, Jamie, and Mary Ann expressed interest in going. Registration is \$65 for whole day. Mary Ann will follow up with Kristi to get us registered. HHLT's Emma Balazs is also attending and carpooling is possible.
- **Envision Resilience:** Update, [Design students – architects & urban planners, etc.] Coastal resilience focus. Mid-coast focus for fall semester. Mary Ann got letter from Envision. Jamie shared section on Harpswell. Portland exhibit – Jamie attended. Very interested. Designed things for summer & for city. Harpswell gives opportunities for more year-round & seasonality for students. Hope to have students come here and present next spring 2026. Popups on different islands. Gearing up for coming fall briefing going out to schools. Did write up on Harpswell – suggested research design options. Letters go out to participating schools to recruit students. Add something about climate sequestration. Abby suggests sensitivity re issues around aquaculture and heritage fishing community. Jamie will keep HCC posted.
- **Marine Resource Committee action:** The Marine Resource Committee is writing a grant to the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund on the carrying capacity for sustaining life in a marine environment. Harpswell now has an Aquaculture Committee. The town currently does not have baseline data needed to better understand what nutrient levels are required for sustaining life. With baseline data, the town can test over time to see if nutrient levels are diminishing. Phase 1 would cover the cost of gathering samples in Middle Bay, Harpswell Sound, the New Meadows near the Gurnet and Bombazine Island. Samples would be taken twice in the summer and twice in the fall and sent to a lab for testing. Phase II would use the data to perform some modeling.
- **Spring Water Wise program:** HCC needs to begin planning for a spring water wise workshop on outside conservation. Members agree we may need more than one to cover the subject. We need to start thinking about what to cover and in what format. One possibility is an indoor workshop with two/three presenters followed by a guided tour of sites around town demonstrating conservation possibilities. Eric Brown, a landscape designer who lives in town and HCC member Jamie Hark might both be good presenters. Planning for the workshop(s) will begin after town meeting!
- **Invasive Species Control – Phragmites.** Members discussed follow up of the January 29th presentations by Casco Bay Estuary Partnership in the control and management of invasive phragmites in our wetlands. Next steps: Matt was going to investigate possible funding to map tidal movement at Long Reach. All agree we need more information on possible mitigation techniques including non-pesticide approaches. The current use of pesticides in other towns

would require modification of our ordinances, which currently forbid the use of pesticides in wetlands. **Follow Up:** Organize a presentation by MCHT staff at MCHT on what control practices they use and invite HHLT's Emma Balazs and HIPP representatives Becky Gallery and Linda Wilkins.

- **Update on Ice Pond:** Tony Barrett explained that the Ice Pond is not subject to resource protection rules because it is a manmade pond made from a dam. A manmade pond can be classified as a great pond if it is over 30 acres, but Ice Pond does not qualify as it is too small at 13 acres. A natural body of water classifies if it is over 10 acres or more. There are other mechanisms to use to apply resource protection (RP) to Ice Pond by using different criteria. Wetland 23 is near Ice Pond. The town could apply RP rules to Ice Pond if it were found to provide inland wading bird habitat. Woodland Associates lists 11 criteria to judge the value of a wetland. [See 1994 Planning Reports and Study on the town website.] Ice Pond was rated low priority for RP in that report. Consideration of Ice Pond status is a good place to start a conversation re RP's value beyond water fowl/wading birds' habitat.

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 PM.

Note Taker: Wendy Batson

Upcoming meeting dates: 3/5 & 3/19

Minute Taking Info

Minute Takers 2025

January	Jenny
February	Deirdre
February	Wendy
March	Abby
March	Ann
April	Nancy
April	Jamie
May	Tony
May	Jenny

Minute Taker Hints

Can use the agenda as template, just substitute Minutes for Agenda

Record attendance, opening and closing time

Record votes - if vote split show the #Yea and nay

Record action items and responsibility

Where possible summarize pertinent discussion

Sign minutes, send draft to members for review; update w edits and resend.

Once minutes approved mark APPROVED and send to: Tina Deschaine, tdeschaine@town.harpswell.me.us

Parking Lot:

- How we might coordinate Willie C Landscape Design into our WaterWise program.
- Planning Board updates to 2025 ordinances regarding Resource Protection flood zones:
 - How to include the updates to the new velocity areas.
 - How will we think about marsh migration and new vulnerable areas?
- Outdoor Pesticide and Fertilizer Ordinance
- Control of Pesticide use on West Shore Rd. (Mary Ann to contact applicator)
- Discuss steps re: increasing no pesticide /fertilizer no use zone.
- How else might we consider keeping duff in 100ft setbacks?
- Time for a larger conversation
 - <https://www.harpswell.maine.gov/vertical/sites/%7B3F690C92>
- Ticks – Should we learn more about what is being used from the applicators in the area, what we can provide differently than the State regarding control products, how the products affect the marine environment?
- Erosion & armoring New State information.
- Marine Resources desire to regulate disintegrating polystyrene in floats and in construction materials. being cut and used near the water. Contact a couple of builders, also check for sample ordinances. SENT BACK TO MRC for writing ordinance. Needs more work. 01/2024

Some interesting reading and watching:

- [resources](#) from Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Low-Impact Forestry (LIF) program with focus on the ecosystem of a forest.
- [i-Tree](#) will show you effects of planting or removing a single tree the other National EPA Soils Calculator - <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/national-stormwater-calculator>
- <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mgs/explore/water/facts/well.htm>
- **P. Slovinsky Jan 2023 explanation of storm erosion on bluffs and wind direction and hard armoring:** <https://www.themainemonitor.org/here-are-some-resources-to-learn-more-about-coastal-erosion-in-maine/>
- P. Slovinsky Feb. 2021 Maine Coastal Property Owner's Guide to Eros., Flood. & Other hazards. https://digitalmaine.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1605&context=mgs_publications
- MOFGA webinar regarding Radical Forestry Management https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPorH1i__Uw#t=0m0s

Edgewood Nurseries Lecture re: Food forest gardening; discusses ability to grow under the canopy of trees if understand the root structure. (Possible talk w/Aaron. edgewoodlandscapes@gmail.com 4 Cruston Way, Falmouth, Maine