

Hallowell Conservation Commission May 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes with June 20 Updates

Meeting Attendees: Rosemary Presnar, Chair; Jean McWilliams, Kat Schweikert, Ben Godsoe, Maureen Drouin, Karen Simpson, Secretary. June Guest: Malena Gatti

1. **Minutes:** March minutes approved at May meeting: Jean/2nd Kat/All. April meeting was canceled. May minutes will be amended with June updates and submitted together.
2. **Jamies Pond Trail Day** (in conjunction with MCC) is June 4 at 9am. Plans include reassessing the trail bridge and stream banks, litter pickup and trail clearing/clipping. Good turnout on June 4 between HCC, Tree Board, and Manchester folks – most trails were trimmed back. Agreed stream bridge closest to boat launch parking lot will need to be fixed in the next 2-5 yrs., discussion on whether to include IF&W staff. Garry H. and Rosemary will coordinate.
3. **Birds of Maine: Sponsored by HCC and KLT** May 10 at the Cohen Center. Barbara Vickery discussed her husband's book, outlining the struggles and successes of birds as they cope with changes brought on by climate change. Great presentation! Twenty-five people attended.
4. **Summary of Brown tail Moth Winter Activities:** Nine volunteers assisted on March 20, cutting webs at all city parks and Stevens Complex; Tree Board folks took care of RES entrance apple tree. An additional cutting day scheduled for March 27th was cancelled but HCC members assisted twelve residents who had called City Hall to ask for assistance.
5. **Annual RES - Mountain Bike (CeMeNEBMA) Club** walkthrough (Rosemary and Garry Hinckley) to monitor trail and park conditions on April 20 per a memo of understanding with the City. They found signs of ATV activity. Will submit a report for review – see Appendix A.
6. **RES/Reservoir Road culvert - beaver conflict.** Ben Nugent, USDA, and Hallowell Public Works will install a “beaver deceiver” at the culvert on Reservoir Rd. The “deceiver” will allow beavers to build their dams without blocking and clogging up the culvert which in turn could flood and erode Reservoir Rd. Work was completed on June 13 by USDA and HPWs. Educational signage near site is being considered.
7. **Vaughan Brook Watershed study.** Rosemary met with the VRMP Director on May 11 to discuss testing plans for the season and to receive dissolved oxygen meters for water quality monitoring; this will be year 2 in the VRMP. This season (Jun-Sep) there will be 6 to 8 readings at 7 monitoring sites and several spot checks in Farmingdale. Landowners have been contacted for parking and access. DEP will also be placing measurement loggers and/or rock sampling bags in the stream at 3 of our sampling sites for additional data collection.
As an additional, water quality concern, there is a desire to lab test water at the beach area at the RES; not sure HCC volunteers will get to it this season.
8. Jean reported that the 2007 **Open Space List** has been updated with additional properties and she is working to add known zoning information.
9. Kat and Maureen met with City Council member Patrick Wynne to determine steps to qualify for grant money to build climate resiliency in the city. They described a three-step process necessary to join the State's **Climate Resiliency Partnership**: a self-evaluation, a public meeting and a resolution of intent by the City Council. Discussion was to plan for an Aug or Sep City Council engagement. The next deadline for grant submission via the CRP is September 20, 2022.
The Maine Climate Council held a full day meeting on June 17 at the Civic Center to assist communities as they begin to adapt to climate change. Several HCC members attended and were impressed with the \$2.5M funded projects throughout the State for over 75 towns; HCC is in agreement on the potential positive impact for Hallowell to engage.
10. **Grow Green Healthy Hallowell** has drafted an ordinance limiting the use of synthetic pesticides in Hallowell. They have assembled information recommending healthy and effective alternatives. Their plan is to bring the ordinance to the Council for a first reading in August 2022. HCC voted (5-0, with one member absent) in favor of supporting the ordinance as drafted. HCC discussion included challenges with enforcement, need for continued public education;

agreement to review any proposed reduced scope from original draft; and future impacts on watershed water quality, soil impairment, and child/pet health. Also, discussion around the importance of Hallowell to support overall community health by setting a tone of concern around toxin use in the city.

- 11. Granite City Park Working Group** has submitted a final report and prioritized list of recommendations and actions to the Council on April 7 and April 11. Progress has been steady and successful with Working Group tasks. An April 23 Earth Day event had 40+ volunteers that allowed the boulder row area to be readied for stone mulch and other areas to be prepared for plantings. HCC will assist the Tree Board and community volunteers with invasive species controls, planting and watering the newly planted trees and shrubs. A \$10,000 AARP grant application was not awarded for a gravel trail this time around. Moving the city snow dump is still a question due to the unknown northern property line of GCP. Tree Board was approved for the Project Canopy grant extension to use up remaining grant funding to fall plantings. To date 22 new native plants have been planted at the park & Vision Hallowell and the Hallowell Arts and Culture Committee are moving forward with funding to place 2 granite sculpture in park.
- 12. State Boat Launch.** Informal communications have been ongoing over the winter with the State Project Manager, City Manager, a Councilor, residents, and HCC Chair on timing and how best to move forward with improvements to the Hallowell Public Boat Launch area. Scheduled onsite meeting with State Project Manager is planned for July 15.
- 13. RES - Passes for Cohen Center.** Jean will coordinate the 5 parking passes for the RES parking area with the Clerk's Office for this season.
- 14. HCC Budget** - This year's closeout is at the end of June. There have been requests for a bench on the Wildflower Trail at the RES and a tool shed in conjunction with the Tree Board. Will add these items to our wish list for next budget cycles.
- 15. Reminder Next HCC meeting** will be in September 2022; we also have two residents interested in joining the Commission in January 2023. Rosemary will follow up.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Simpson, Secretary and
Rosemary Presnar, Chair
July 20, 2022

Appendix A - attached

Appendix A – CeMENEMBA and Hallowell annual assessment of the RES Trails

Annual Meeting between CeMENEMBA and the Hallowell Conservation Commission to Review the Hallowell Recreation Area (Res) Trails

April 20, 2022

As required by the MOU between CeMENEMBA and the City of Hallowell, representatives of CeMENEMBA and the Hallowell Conservation Commission met on Wednesday April 20th^h at 2pm at the Res to review trail conditions, and discuss future work efforts. The trail walk through was conducted by Garry Hinkley from CeMENEMBA and Rosemary Presnar, HCC Chair.

The Hallowell Recreational area (the Res) continues to be a popular recreational area for walkers, hikers, runners, mountain bikers, snowshoers, XC skiers, snowmobilers, and wildlife watchers. The parcel is contiguous to other protected areas including state wildlife management areas, Manchester town forests, and KLT property.

The walk through determined that the Res single track trail system generally is in very good shape. The trails have been cleared of major debris, and drainages have been maintained. Garry and Rosemary noted only minor localized issues of trail degradation due to riding or walking around challenging conditions. This was noted primarily on the “figure eight” section which connects the Quarry Road to the “Piney Woods” section. Figure eight crosses an old quarry tailings area, and riders are avoiding the rougher sections causing the trail to widen in a couple areas. This and few other similar areas should be watched and possibly addressed in the future. Garry and Rosemary noted a couple minor wet spots that should be watched as well. There is one wet spot on the upper portion of Little Egypt, west of the wall crossing that could easily be fixed with some minor drainage work.

There is a large wet area at the bottom of Beacon Road to the intersection of the double track roads near the old beacon pads. The area has been further damaged by ATV incursions. This section is not part of the single-track trail, and may be partially outside of the city’s property. The single track has a bypass of this area to continue toward the “Junkyard”. We recommend no action for this section, other than avoiding riding or walking through the wet section.

There have been some ATV incursions on the double track trails, notably on the upper portion of Porcupine Trail, north of the intersection, and on the Quarry trail. Rosemary will acquire and install some additional “No ATV” signs at appropriate locations.

One of the recommendations from the Hallowell-NPS project was that the entrance-exit from the Piney Woods loop to the Pipeline be rerouted to make the access more gradual. The prior access essentially went up and down an embankment from the Pipeline Road. Access was difficult, somewhat unsafe, and potentially damaging to the trail. CeMENEMBA designed an alternative that incorporated switchbacks on the ridge to make the connection more gradual, more user friendly, safer, and less prone to erosion. CeMENEMBA trail crew built the trail re-route last year. The revised trail was signed, the old trail was blocked, and the re-route seems to be working well.

The Pipeline Road has suffered from motor vehicle incursions. Additional efforts should be made to keep ATVs and trucks out of the Res.

The HCC has reviewed and marked the Res' boundaries, and to resolve ownership issues. The HCC continues to resolve ownership issues with the National Guard parcel, and the Beacon Road ROW.

Last year, the Town of Manchester, in conjunction with CeMENEMBA, constructed 1.5 miles of trail which connects the Res to Kerns Hill Road in Manchester. The Town plans to build about 2.5 additional miles of trail on Town of Manchester town forests, adjacent to the Res.

Respectfully,

Garry Hinkley, CeMENEMBA Sec.