

## Hallowell Conservation Commission – January 2023 Minutes

### **January 23, 2023 6:30pm by Zoom**

Attendees: Rosemary Presnar, Chair; Kat Schweikert; Karen Simpson; Jean McWilliams; Malena Gatti; Maureen Drouin; Hilary Neckles, Recorder; Ryan Martin, guest

### Agenda

1. **November** minutes approved. Hilary is recorder for current meeting, Jean is recorder for February meeting.
2. **Welcome** new members (Malena and Hilary) and guest (Ryan). Ryan is new Ward 3 City Councilor. Chairs Recreation Commission and has seat on Council's Public Lands Committee.
3. **HCC administration.** All should have access to HCC Google Drive folder. Rosemary maintains HCC Facebook page. Conservation Commissions are administered under state statute and HCC responsibilities are defined by ordinance.
4. **Deb Perkins** invited to give public lecture: Landscaping for Biodiversity and Water Quality. Sunday afternoon, March 26<sup>th</sup>. HCC will cover \$430 cost. Considering Fire Station as first choice venue, Cohen Center as alternative.
5. **2022 Budget.** \$3165 allocated. Remaining expenditures will include speaker fee for the March lecture, signage at Berry Conservation Area, HCC banner. HCC will request \$3165 for 2023.
6. **Planning Board** alerts. None. Noted that solar project at Granite Hill Estates was approved.
7. **Open space lots and current zoning.** HCC will review current zoning of public, open space lots with an eye toward appropriateness. In particular, RF (rural farm) zoning designation is defined "to provide for a low-density, rural residential area located generally west of the turnpike"; therefore in theory, it would be within the current zoning designation to convert lots zoned RF in the Hallowell Recreation Area, to Open Space(OP). OP description in ordinance 9-432 notes "it shall generally include the City Recreation Area,..." HCC will complete a thorough review and make recommendations to City Council by fall. How zoning overlays with Comprehensive Plan goals for open space will be part of February examination of Comp Plan Implementation Plan assignments to HCC.
8. **Berry Conservation Area.** Rosemary is meeting with KLT & City of Augusta/Howard Hill on Jan 24<sup>th</sup>. KLT currently looking for land steward for this area. HCC will continue to work with KLT on conservation.
9. **Grow Green Healthy Hallowell.** Karen and Ryan reported that the Land Management Ordinance came out of Ordinance Rewrite Committee as an effective yet moderate ordinance, including reasonable exemptions and waivers. Karen met with Matt Morrill regarding his concern about the ability to control grubs under the proposed ordinance. Code Enforcement Officers from municipalities with similar ordinances report that enforcement has not added significantly to work loads. Public information session on proposed ordinance is scheduled for January 30<sup>th</sup> at City Hall Auditorium, 6:30pm.
10. **Hallowell Climate Action.** Hilary reported that the City was awarded Efficiency Maine grant to fund 90% of the cost of a dual port public EV charging station downtown; will be installed in April/May – if timing is right, Rosemary suggested tying ribbon cutting in with Earth Day activities. HCA is beginning to plan for next round of Community Resilience Partnership

Action Grants, anticipated in March. HCA Core Team meets monthly by Zoom, hoping to establish multiple Action Teams to implement ideas in 2023.

11. **2023-24 HCC Planning.** Will be topic of February meeting: Existing project list, 2022 Comprehensive Plan HCC assignments, other projects of interest such as ME DEP Volunteer River Monitoring Program and ME Audubon Stream Explorers biomonitoring program.
12. **2023 Proposed Events/Partnerships.** Landscaping for Biodiversity & Water Quality public lecture by Deb Perkins, March 26<sup>th</sup>; Earth Day, April 22; Jamies Pond Cleanup, June 3.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hilary Neckles