

Hallowell Conservation Commission – Monday, April 24, 2023 - approved
Hallowell Fire Station, Coos Lane, 6:30pm -- In Person and Zoom

Present: In person, Rosemary Presnar, chair; Ben Godsoe; Hilary Neckles; Karen Simpson; On zoom, Jean McWilliams

Agenda

1. **Call to Order**, Quorum was present; Volunteer Recorder is Hilary Neckles

2. **Additions to agenda**

- Steam Explorers aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling is currently being scheduled by Hilary for late May; all HCC members received invitation
- Garry Hinkley, representative of the mountain bike group using the Res trails, reached out to Rosemary about trail maintenance needs. Rosemary explained the history: Hallowell signed MOUs with the biking group and the snowmobile club using the trails on shared trail maintenance, and one task is to walk trails once per year to assess needs. Karen will walk the trails soon to assess needs. One issue to consider is whether some trails should be rerouted to prevent excessive widening from foot traffic. Ultimately the Recreation Commission could take over MOUs on trails.

3. **March minutes**. Thank you Malena for recording; approved. Rosemary noted that response from Mayor and Council on how they want to receive input on Comp Plan assignments still pending.

4. **Draft Open Space Ordinance**. Reviewed draft changes to existing ordinance prepared by Ben. Intent is to clarify the lands included in the Open Space (OS) District. In general, the focus of the Ordinance should be City-owned properties or lands in private ownership with legal designation for specific protections (e.g. habitat protection, public recreation, working forest or farmland, cultural or historic preservation). Identified follow-ups needed; responsible HCC members will complete tasks within 10d.

5. **Hallowell sustainability website**. Update and discussion tabled until next meeting

6. **GG & HH status**. Karen reported that GGHH met April 12th to clarify and simplify the language in the proposed Landcare Management Ordinance(LMO). This revision will be submitted to Mayor to collate with clarifications from Council. A special Council meeting will be held sometime May 18-25 to come to consensus on all suggested changes. If passage is likely it will go to Council for second reading. Noted that if Council fails to approve the ordinance, GGHH could take it to the voters in referendum. One key GGHH suggested change to LMO Enforcement(with penalty) would be an effective date of 01Jan2025.

Karen will submit for HCC reimbursement of signs, then they will be given away to high-visibility locations scattered throughout city.

7. HCA/CRP status. Hilary reported:

- EV Charging Station expected to ship June 12th. HCA would like to recommend pricing mode (fixed rate per session; fixed rate per hour connected; fixed rate per hour charging; graduated rate per hour; fixed rate per kWh transferred) and fee.
- Energy Management Consultants out of Portland has expressed interest in doing City Hall energy efficiency audit for next CRP grant cycle
- Window Dressers community build – participatory model building producing low-cost insulating window inserts that function as custom, interior-mounted storm windows. Big volunteer commitment with detailed timeline, beginning now, for a fall/winter community build. HCA will decide this week whether to commit to holding a community build this fall/winter season or next.

8. Recreation Commission status – Malena was officially appointed by Mayor last month

9. Recent Event Debriefs – Many successes, great work all! March 26 Deb Perkins presentation was standing room only; April 12 Efficiency Maine presentation on residential program had ~25 participants, good info transfer but the post-presentation reception was halted abruptly by fire alarm; April 22, Earth Day, ~40 volunteers filled 12 contractor bags of trash at GCP and other areas. Spiral Dance Collective performance was a big draw.

10. 2023 Proposed Events/Partnerships –

- Jamies Pond Cleanup – June 3 (National Trails Day)
- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee interested in potentially pairing education on ways to reduce plastics with other sustainability events by bringing in a GoGo Refill education program. Suggested setting up at Farmers Market. HCC happy to advertise event on Fb page.
- Pollinator Garden will set a fixed day/time day per week for volunteers

11. Planning Board alerts – Rosemary sent HCC recommendations on the Stevens Commons community solar farm proposal. Site visit scheduled for May 16th, 6:30 PM. Public meeting. Unknown how the solar farm will be administered – open for membership only to Stevens Commons? Hallowell residents? Any CMP customer?

12. HCC Watch Items – Update on RES/National Guard parcel, cost will likely be \$40K over payment period (rather than \$80K).

Adjourned 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Hilary Neckles