

OFFICIAL MINUTES: Business Meeting
Eliot Conservation Commission
Eliot, Maine 03903

DATE: April 3, 2024

OFFICERS:

Chair: Kari Moore

Vice Chair: Lisa Wise

Secretary: Lynn Bublely

Treasurer: Peter Egelston

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON AND ONLINE

1. 6:00 PM Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Kari Moore with roll call at 6:15 PM (technical issues). In attendance: Kari Moore (Chair), Lisa Wise (Vice Chair – filled in on notes), Peter Egelston (Treasurer), David Marshall (Member); Richie Kaknes (Member) joined later; absent: Lynn Bublely (Secretary)

2. Public Input: None

3. Review and approve past minutes:

There were no meeting minutes to review.

4. Financial Update: No updates

5. Project Development/Permit Review/Planning Studies:

- No projects/permits to discuss.
- **Comprehensive Plan update** – Kari reported that public workshops will be coming up in May
- **Eliot Active Transportation** – Kari mentioned a recent email from Jeff Brubaker that had several updates; **Kari to share upcoming community workshop on ECC Facebook page**
 - Eastern Trail Feasibility Study – community workshop 4/30/2024, 6:30pm – <https://www.eliotmaine.org/home/events/44701>
- **Climate vulnerability assessment** – Lisa reported that she met with Jeff Brubaker and Paul Shiner (Planning Board member) last week to discuss the 9 proposals received for this project; that will be launching soon; the town also matched with a UNH Sustainability Fellow to work on this project for the summer.

6. Open Space Plan Update

- **Open Space Plan update** – Lisa reported that Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission is working on maps, and will be planning a community workshop (coordinating with Jeff around workshops for comprehensive plan)

7. Conservation Land

- Discussion re: parcel on Ian's Lane – Landowner had reached out to Mike Sullivan and Kari wanting to gift the parcel to the town. It would be a challenge to develop because of zoning/wetlands. From mapping, the parcel seems to have some habitat values and the wetland appears to drain into Spruce Creek. Mike was not interested in accepting the parcel, worried about potential for liability.
 - Peter wants to know what exactly the exposure is in terms of liability.
 - David said the liability issue is typically non substantial, but mentioned the stewardship responsibilities involved in taking on town-owned land. There needs to be some real conservation value to the land to make it worthwhile. If people are interested in this parcel, suggests doing a site visit to check it out. There is more interest in checking out the larger parcels in that area to see if any landowners are interested in pursuing conservation.
 - Peter asked what if the landowner just stops paying the taxes? The town would have to determine what to do with the parcel at that point anyway.
 - Group is leaning toward acknowledging that there is some conservation value given the extensive wetlands and connectivity to Spruce Creek, but it seems unlikely to see development happening here. We would want to be engaged in any future proposals to develop or otherwise change land use on this parcel. **Kari will draft a memo to the Select Board to this effect.**
- Future project ideas mentioned included communicating with landowners of large parcels; developing trails at the Johnson Lane town forest; and figuring out access issues to both town forest parcels

8. Education/Outreach

- **Earth Day Brownie Troop Event: April 18, 5 pm** – ECC will lend them grabbers/supplies.
- **Trail clean up Earth Day Event Partnership with GWRLT and Sierra Club: 4/20/24, 9am**
 - Town forest – cleaning up trails, fixing signs, blazing trails.
 - Probably meet up near Aubrey's and park near trailhead
 - Peter made a motion to budget up to \$150 for materials/supplies for this event, to be reimbursed as needed; Richie seconded; all in favor.
 - **Peter can make a sign to publicize the event; Lisa to send newsletter; Kari to share the details.**

- Richie suggested putting a sign at Goodwin Forest
 - May need an informal meeting in between now and 4/20 to finalize the plan.
 - Who's available – Kari, Lisa, maybe Richie.
- **Regional Initiatives**
 - **York River** – workshop scheduled for 4/4 has been cancelled due to the storm – that was going to be a priority setting discussion, will be rescheduled; watershed grants – applications are due end of April; another Eliot representative has expressed interest in joining the York River Stewardship Committee
 - **Invasive Species** – look into whether the minutes can be shared.
 - **Piscataqua River** – no updates

9. Roundtable

- Peter mentioned idea of having a starter pack for land conservation – a resource you could hand to someone or mail to landowners.
 - Kari said that Great Works has a resource that has been mailed out previously; they may have an updated version
 - Lisa shared this resource – *Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners* from Maine Coast Heritage Trust (updated in 2021) – <https://www.mcht.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ConservationOptions- r8 sm.pdf>
 - Lisa: Request this to be added to ECC webpage

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.

10. Next Regular Business Meeting: May 1, 6pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Wise

Vice Chair

CC: Eliot Town Clerk, Commission Members, Commission File