

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

**DATE: November 1, 2017
APPROVED: December 6, 2017**

OFFICERS:

**Chairman: Kimberly Richards
Vice chairman: Glenn Crilley
Secretary: Lisa Graichen
Treasurer: Kari Moore**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM at the Eliot Town Hall.

In attendance: MEMBERS - Kimberly Richards, Lisa Graichen, Kari Moore, Jack Murphy (Liaison to Select Board), Connie Weeks (alternate), Glenn Crilley; GUESTS - Christine Bennett (Kittery Land Trust Executive Director/Eliot resident; previously with Great Works Regional Land Trust), Jess O'Donaghue

Public input: Jess O'Donaghue (wants to join Conservation Commission)

Membership Update: Andrew has to resign; Linda Anderson (alternate) has to step aside as well - alternates also need to formally resign; Glenn is slowly backing out - could step into an alternate position if someone wants to be a full member

- Jess will submit her paperwork tomorrow
- Lisa: Contact Wendy about posting about alternates

Review and Approve Past Minutes:

- September 6, 2017: Kari made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Glenn seconded; unanimously approved
- October 4, 2017 (unofficial minute - no quorum, but distributed notes as a reference)

Financial Report: Kari: No changes to report.

Commission Bylaws:

- Kim looked up different towns' bylaws for their Conservation Commissions, took the common elements; all - review and identify any changes; go over at next meeting and revise as needed
- Kim - send electronic version

Development Projects Review

- Planning Board - first meeting of the month (1st Tuesday) = planning discussions (e.g., bylaws, growth management ordinance); second meeting of the month (3rd Tuesday) = reviewing applications
- Christine: Conservation Commission should be getting notice of application reviews; i don't see applications until Friday night before Tuesday meeting, don't get actual plans until Monday; Friday afternoon, PB gets Google Doc - agenda, minutes, and applications → cc the Select Board and ECC
 - Christine will raise that on Tuesday
- More manageable for us to have a rotating ECC member to attend meetings
- We want copies sent to us
- Kim: No projects that I know of that we should be paying attention to; there is an issue with the Schiller Plant - air monitoring (that was a group of citizens); EPA didn't record any exceedances (sulfur dioxide), they've ratcheted down their emissions - they're supposed to be 65% less than what they were; reached out to Sierra Club director in Maine (citizens group partnered with them on this) - will keep ECC posted
 - Christine: No coal being burned there - full switch to natural gas! (as of August)

Guest: Christine Bennett - vernal pools

- Very significant and vulnerable to development
- Here to promote the idea that ECC think about starting to inventory vernal pools in Eliot (new state program - towns can regulate their own vernal pools in their growth areas - like our commercial/industrial zone; they can assess fees of the developers when they allow them to already impaired resources (e.g., 236) - can allow more impacts to happen on those resources and protect resources in the more rural area at a 2:1 ratio; it's been trialed in Brunswick and Bangor; KLT working with Kittery to do one of these with a business park
- Presented this to the Planning Board - response from planning assistant: what if there are no vernal pools in Eliot - but they just haven't been mapped; multiple towns around us have mapped vernal pools; we can't expect Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Assistant to enforce the rules if they don't know they're there
- Vernal pool mapping and inventorying is really fun! Maybe piggyback on efforts this spring in Kittery and York - join forces
- Definition: ephemeral, temporary wetland with no inlet/outlet to another waterbody
- Ecological significance: breeding habitat to amphibians - support the forest food chain; pool-breeding species are the most threatened amphibians on the East Coast; aquatic islands of biodiversity; many amphibian species depend on them for their life cycle; support rare and endangered species; provides first food for animals coming out of hibernation/migrating north

- Regulation: apply only to “significant vernal pools” - have to reach a threshold (certain number of egg masses, natural not manmade) → 250’ setback (not enough biologically but it’s something); enforced by the state (DEP) when you have a subdivision/large developments; landowners are supposed to determine if they are significant and abide by regs; Code Enforcement Officer and Planner enforce locally
- Christine: My goal is to get it into the town GIS
- Glenn: Some have already been identified by engineers during site planning (e.g., old campground) - nice to see that vernal pools were mentioned in the engineering plans
- Maps - existing maps don’t accurately represent the resource (10-20%), sparse and flawed, hard to locate remotely (satellites, aerial photos) - require on-the-ground confirmation, challenging because of seasonality - window of time
 - Timing challenge: Plans come before Planning Board in summer
- Community-based inventories
 - Primary purpose = provide database for natural resource planning
 - Secondary purpose = educate the community about local natural resources
 - Christine works with the schools; also work with adults - review potential conservation candidates
 - If we want to pursue this, need buy-in from Select Board, Town Manager, and staff ideally; land trusts play pivotal roles - Christine has been in touch with GWRLT about supporting this, she can help (e.g., train volunteers)
 - GIS analysis - York Land Trust and KLT use town GIS → look at the two-foot contours for depressions (possible vernal pools) - identify places to walk; use the same GIS system to find property owner
 - Need permission from landowners
 - Need to take photos and location/boundary for GIS shapefile
 - Apps available to do this function
 - State has a Citizen’s Guide
 - DEP collects the data - needs people to be certified (some wetland ecology and experience on the ground); York Land Trust Stewardship Coordinator is certified; Sue Bickford at Wells NERR
- PB can’t ask for that info if they’re not already doing a site plan review engineering study; but if it’s in the GIS system, we could look at it when reviewing applications
- Connie: How do I register the one on my property?
 - Glenn: I did a survey a few years ago and submit it but didn’t go through; it meets the criteria; at that time they were thinking about doing a state registry
 - Christine: State adopted regs in 2007 (Glenn’s survey was before that)
 - Eliot = only town in southern Maine that doesn’t uphold the state regs
- Have to do a survey twice (wood frogs first, then later for salamanders)
- What’s our first step? Getting town buy-in, putting together a plan, doing some mapping

- Ask to present to Select Board - go through Town Manager to get on the agenda
- Public forum - Christine's presentation, recruit volunteers → January/February - planning, trainings in February/March, boots hit the ground in April, spring/summer - put data together and send to Natural Areas Program
 - Does IFNW charge \$? ECC budget? Need to get that ready to go in next year's budget. How much? Aram Calhoun at UMaine Orono - **Kari: Ask what it might cost, reach out to Brunswick to see how they did it**
- Beginning with Habitat - can put some maps together for us; then we could give them data to incorporate into GIS layers; would be good to reach out to Bill
- Lisa can connect with Stewardship Network
- Town lands = first step (Glenn has found a few)
- **Kim and Connie look at putting together the budget, need to get on the Select Board/Budget Committee agenda**

Old business:

- **Great Hill Gravel - findings and next steps**
 - Lisa shared information from Peggy Bensinger
 - Jess: All of us abutters want water tested - shouldn't have to pay for it
 - Connie: Could Great Works Regional Land Trust get involved?
 - Lisa tried reaching Heather Ross for information, no response yet
 - Glenn: Code Enforcement Officer has to coordinate with state person
 - **Lisa: Send Kim list of communication attempts**
- **Libbey Farm Project**
 - Paul is going to contact Kittery Trading Post to gauge interest

Roundtable:

- Christine: Kittery Land Trust organizing the Seacoast Environmental Film Festival - 12/2/17 @ Kittery Community Center - **ECC help publicize! Christine will send promo**

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 7:00PM at the Eliot Town Hall

Connie motioned to adjourn, Jess seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Graichen
Secretary, ECC

Cc: Eliot Town Clerk, Commission Members, Commission File