**Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, January 21, 21 5 – 6:30 pm

Zoom Meeting (due to COVID 19)

Attendees: Tom Minogue, Sharon Minogue, Ralph Topham, Nancy Hathaway, Chris Stark, Heather Richard of the Shaw Institute, Lucy Leaf

**Minutes** of last meeting – approved

**Treasurer’s Report** – Tom Minogue

No Change. Membership dues of $100 for the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions will be due in June.

**Planning Board Update** – Tom Minogue

The Planning board scheduled for 1/27/2021 at 7 pm will be held at the **VFW Hall in Ellsworth.** Surry residents can also attend by Zoom (link will be on the town site). The Executive Order, due to the pandemic, requires social distancing for public meetings and the town’s meeting room size is too small to accommodate 50+ people physically attending a Planning Board Meeting.

**Patten Bay Project Update** – Heather Richard/Ralph Topham

$3000 initial amount budgeted. The initial microbial testing was exploratory and was a snapshot of high amounts of enterococcus bacteria which were from avian sources. Heather reported that the $2000 in the approved budget from the Town of Surry is for 60 IDEXX [fecal] tests (at $30 per test, and for 10 hours of Heather’s work in analysis and reporting. The 60 tests will cover testing at Patten and Flood Stream outlets as well as the Surry Wharf, Abenaki Road, and other stream entry points into Patten Bay. The goal is to compare bacteria levels in Patten Bay with those coming in from the Union River and to identify any potential influence of rainfall or seasonal differences. The testing will be weekly or every other week. The testing would be from mid-late April and continue up to November. This may change depending on test results and weather conditions.

From the Under Canvas budget, Shaw Institute has also budgeted 3K for 100 IDEXX tests. This pays for weekly testing of three locations for each of the 27 weeks between early May and late October, including one site on the Union River side of Weymouth Point, and 19 extra tests to monitor for enterococcus in the runoff waters within the watershed of their campus or screening tests for additional microbial source testing.

Heather said that Shaw Institute is trying to get Patten Bay on a list for priority waterway to work with DMR to do shellfish surveys. The next immediate step for Shaw Institute is to **hire** someone as an **intern** for water monitoring.

There may be volunteer opportunities (to be determined). Volunteers might conduct wildlife/biomonitoring surveys since the initial tests traced bacteria from avian sources.

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There is also a possibility to have volunteers conduct Green Crab Surveys and some Green crab traps are available.

Other:

Sharon mentioned that testing at the Public Town Landing should remain a priority because it is where some residents swim on hot days. [Maine broke the record for the hottest summer in 144 years last year]

Another area to explore might be for the toxic testing of sediment.

**ACTION**: Ralph and Heather will meet to discuss next steps and to review the budget

**Carrying Place Update –** Ralph Topham

Ralph & Cheryl Topham, Tom Minogue, Nancy Hathaway and Chris Stark looked at the property from Carrying Place Road and the parking lot. The parking lot is on the owner’s property. The owner provides permission to Surry residents to park there and it is the only parking lot available for Carrying Place beach access.

The owner once offered to sell the land to the town. The commission is curious as to whether the owner is still interested in selling the land. Sharon mentioned that if the town were to own it to assure beach access for residents, that the parking area could be upgraded to have changing rooms and information about the Wabanaki History there [a small kiosk]. A hiking trail to Morgan Bay might also be a possibility.

**ACTION**:

Lucy offered to talk to John Curtis of the Surry Historical Society about the history of the area.

Tom & Ralph will try to get more information on the land.

**Stars Over Surry** – Nancy Hathaway

There will be Carrying Place beach night sky tour on October 3rd or 4th that will cost $250.

**Other-**

Chris- Ask at Town Office about notifying public of Conservation Commission meeting notices, agenda and minutes (currently not on the site that is under construction)

Tom – Bring up to the planning board about whether Surry should consider adopting a **Community Solar Ordinance t**o protect Surry’s natural resources like Blue Hill is doing right now.

Ralph suggested we review the **Conservation Commission charter** (the 1989 ordinance) self-evaluate with mission and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.

Follow up items:

Conservation Commission website/notices

Planning Board Update

Patten Bay Project Next Steps/Budget plan

Carrying Place inquiry

Conservation Commission Charter Review and Discussion

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**The next meeting will be on zoom on Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 5 pm.**

**TOWN OF SURRY is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Topic: Conservation Commission**

**Time: Feb 18, 2021 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81226263544**

**Meeting ID: 812 2626 3544**

**One tap mobile**

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**+13017158592,,81226263544# US (Washington DC)**

– submitted by Chris Stark, secretary