

Kennebunkport Conservation Commission Meeting Report

In-Person and Zoom Meeting, Kennebunkport Fire Station, Kennebunkport

February 13, 2023

Commission Members attending: Carol Morris, Jennifer Comeau, Robin Phillips, Susan Kaagan

Members of the public attending via Zoom: Michael Dunlop, Robert Searles, and one other.

Meeting began at 6:00 pm

1. The commission voted unanimously to accept minutes from the January 9 meeting.
2. Healthy Ecosystem Ordinance – Robin noted that she had provided a copy of the Town of Blue Hill’s ordinance to Werner Gilliam for input and had also spent time talking with the individuals in Blue Hill who had organized the Citizen’s Referendum on the ordinance. Werner provided feedback on where he saw weaknesses in this ordinance, noting that an ordinance needs to be enforceable, not confusing to the public, and the definitions need to be consistent. It is good for it to not conflict with the Town’s approved Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the Town would assess the impact of a new ordinance in terms of cost and resources, and that once the BOS indicated that they were not averse to having it on the ballot, it would go through legal review. He was asked what existing ordinances would be a good model and responded that the Floodplain Management and Shoreland Zoning ordinances might be useful. In terms of resources, he advised that looking at where and how the largest amount of pesticides were applied could be a good place to start – a way of getting the “biggest bang (reduction in usage) for the buck (buck being town resources),” adding that dealing with individual residents could be quite time-consuming. He also added that information from other communities that had passed a pesticide ordinance on the number of violations they are seeing and their methodology would be good information for the town to have in terms of assessing cost and resources.

ACTION ITEM: Call communities with pesticide ordinances

(https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/public/municipal_ordinances.shtml) to get information on this.

3. Education and Outreach -

- a. Brochure Distribution Update – **ACTION ITEM:** Create a subcommittee meeting to outline a strategy on how the Commission should deploy these resources.
- b. Tom Atwood Event Update – March 2 – Carol outlined the publicity created to date and noted she is meeting with Mary Lou Boucouvalas at Graves on the 21st at 3 pm to ID final set up and prep. **ACTION ITEM:** Jen agreed to join Carol.
ACTION ITEM: Jen will put together an email list of needed final actions for the event so commission members can assign themselves tasks.
- c. Annual Report – A thank you to Jen for writing the KCC section for the Town Annual Report.
- d. Goose Rocks Beach Invasives Project: Maine Community Foundation Grant: The town has received the grant funding, a process for paying invoices has been created, KCT's Isaac Schuchat has interviewed a promising intern. The Town is checking on potential conflicts in terms of timing the planting with an abutter. Creating educational materials on invasives and dune preservation will be intern's first steps. Carol will present to BAC board to update them and assess any joint actions.
- e. Black Rock Farm May Container Gardening Event: Helene Lewand has agreed to host a workshop in May at Black Rock on using Natives for Container Gardening. Detailed work on this will begin in March.
- f. Pollinator Pathway: Mary Ellen Lemay is willing to host a how-to webinar for multiple towns and organizations. Target month is early April. **ACTION ITEM:** Carol to reach out to adjoining towns to ascertain interest.
- g. Native Plant Fair – Carol is having a discussion with expert Ginger Lauritis of Wild Seeds Project and Kbunk CC's Jen Shack on Feb. 15 as to how we might go about

this. Kport CC members wondered if next year might be a more realistic target date

- h. Atlantic Hall event: Mary Gikness offered to partner with KCC on an August event with booths (similar to Jan 28 Wilding Event) and possibly one speaker that would occur at the same time as the Atlantic Hall Library book sale. More to come on this.
4. Updates on Other Ongoing Issues and Projects – The Town has agreed to fund the water testing for pesticides, but cannot also fund the Education budget, so other funding or austerity measures will be needed. The Commission is very pleased with this decision. Additionally, as of the March meeting, KCC meetings will be open to the public but not on Zoom.
5. New Business – There was none.
6. Public Comment – Michael Dunlop, Kennebunkport resident, expressed his opinion that the existing licensing regulations for pesticides do adhere to science and that if used properly, do not have “unreasonable adverse effects. He took exception to the Commissions’ ongoing assertions that science shows that pesticides do harm the environment, insects, birds, aquatic creatures, and humans, especially children. Members commented that the science of assessing harm from pesticides and other chemicals is evolving and substances such as DDT – and more recently PFAS – were once considered safe. The Commission’s stance is that the safest strategy is to use as few pesticides as possible in the lowest possible amounts, with the goal being to use none at all.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.