

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission

March 04, 2024 6:00 PM

City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/91621088534?pwd=Tk5yRGt1b1Z0eHEzTElSdGhKb3VuQT09>

Webinar ID 916 2108 8534; Passcode 276637

Status: Conservation Commission, Monday, March 4, 2024, 6:00 PM, City Council Chambers & Zoom

Attendees:

Richard Rhames, Michael Lowell, Peter Robbins, Erik Heumiller, Maya Atlas

1. Call to Order (6:05)

2. Secretary's Report

2.1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from 1-29-2024

[BCC-Meeting-Notes-2024-01-29 \(002\).pdf](#)

Motion to approve: MA

Seconded: PR

Vote: Unanimous

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

3.1 DEP Participation?

Volunteer River Monitoring Program (VRMP) team will attend the 3/27 meeting.

4. Discussions

4.1. Climate Task Force conservation update

Governor's "30 by 30" program (30% of lands conserved at State level by 2030)

- Close to Forest goals (25% +/-)
- Only 3% of Farmland goals
- State is changing goal to "double farmland instead of 30% targets"
 - Could this make funds available to Biddeford landowners to put farmland in conservation? (E. Heumiller)
- Good time to do landowner outreach to capitalize on the state level action

4.2. Solar Power Installations, Policy Committee Discussion

[3-4-24 Maine 131 - HP 1206 item 9.pdf](#)

[3-4-24 Policy Committee Packet.pdf](#)

- Policy Chair favors the structure of Fryeburg's ordinance
 - David G. to begin working on a draft ordinance
- Biddeford should cap the amount of land that can be used for solar development
 - Percentage of the acreage of the city? (E. Heumiller)
 - Percentage of solar development relevant to conservation %? (M. Atlas)
- Most projects lead to 20 acres of cleared land (D. Galbraith)
- Ordinance text should contain language that developers pay for study, but the City of Biddeford hires independent contractors to perform the study. (E. Heumiller)
 - State level discussions have shown an interest in hearing feedback on this
- Cell tower development examples show the negative impacts of projects where developers hire their own consultants (R. Rhames)
 - Supports the need for developers to put funds into a pool and for the City to hire consultants
- Private market development being subsidized by City/State?

- The City could/should create a prioritized pipeline for developers bringing solar to existing infrastructure on roofing, parking lots, etc. (E. Heumiller)
 - MaineWater looking to develop solar on the 100 acres they retained on their land (R. Rhames)
- Can Biddeford set up our own mitigation plans to offset the loss of carbon sequestration in forested lands? (E. Heumiller)
- "Lookback period" should be extended to 5 years (P. Robbins)
 - Illegal or unpermitted clearcutting should void the ability to develop solar (E. Heumiller, R. Rhames)
- Phased development should be avoided/not acceptable to limit working around City limitations/caps. (E. Heumiller, P. Robbins)
- Prioritize solar development locations under transmission lines (R. Rhames)
- Conservation Commission members to research independently and regroup at our next meeting.

4.3. Clifford Park Easement, Policy Committee Discussion

- Partially funded by Maine MNRCP??
- Policy Committee is in favor of putting a conservation on the entirety of Clifford Park (R. Rhames)
- A workshop with Maine Coast Heritage Trust would be helpful to educate Policy, Conservation, Recreation, and Planning Board members on the options they may want to include. (M. Atlas)
- Review and provide direction/recommendations on how to move forward with conservation easements for the entirety of Clifford Park

4.4. Working Lands Index - Mandatory Cluster in RF zone

- Denis Rioux raised the question about this at the last meeting.
 - Cluster zoning is not mandatory in RF zones, but it is common practice because it saves the upfront costs of developing and maintaining roadways. (D. Galbraith)
- Current use map
 - Overlays with tree growth
 - Fields with mowing/hay
- If you are going to do a cut, you have to file with the Maine State Forest Service.
 - This could create a starting point for landowner contacts (R. Rhames)

4.5. Facebook Posting

- No immediate plans for outreach.
 - By posting, the City accounts can reshare our announcements/content.
- We can use Facebook to attract volunteers for the VRMP work. (E. Heumiller)
- Another way to connect with landowners is to have the City post items to tax bills. (D. Galbraith)

4.6. Website Discussion

[Website.pdf](#)

- E. Heumiller will implement R. Rhames notes for the next meeting on 3/27.

4.7. City Parcel Tax Map 1, Lot 19, 25 acres & adjoining parcels

- Keith Fletcher - Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT)
 - He'll talk about the MaineWater parcel status and other elements at our next meeting on 3/27.

- D. Galbraith confirmed that this parcel should be transferred into a conservation easement through Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

5. Other Business

5.1. MaineWater has invited BCC to tour the facility if we are interested. (M. Lowell)

6. Adjourn - Next Meeting-Monday, March 27, 2024, 6:00 PM-Second Floor Conference Room

Motion to adjourn: P. Robbins

Seconded: M. Lowell

Vote: Unanimous

(7:50 PM)