

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission
March 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

Attendees:

Richard Rhames, Erik Heumiller, Denis Rioux, Patrick Conlon

Staff:

Adi Iriqat, Assistant Planner

Guest:

Sarah Hoover, APEX Youth Connection

Call to order: 5:55 pm

1.

Adjustment(s) to Agenda

2.

Secretary Report

2.a Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 26th, 2025

- Motion to approve: D. Rioux, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous

3.

Updates

3.a Solar Ordinance Updates

- Next step is for the Policy Committee to review on 3/24
- Following their approval, it will go to City Council
- Any changes, it may need to be reviewed by Planning Board again

3.b Swan Pond Lot - Conservation Easement (Map-1, Lot-19)

- E. Heumiller circulated a draft recommendation to send to the City Council and Mayor Grohman to encourage the transfer of the parcel at Map-1, Lot-19 to a title-in-fee conservation structure

3.c Comp Plan Update

- Adi working with state partners to finalize the Comp Plan
 - Discrepancies between the document on the Biddeford website and the version that was submitted to the state to ensure we're working from the accurate version
- Comp Plan implementation document is nearly complete
 - BCC can potentially review the document at our April meeting if it is completed by that point

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- 3.d GPCOG (Greater Portland Council of Governments) Trail Plan Update
- Existing Regional Trail Map: <https://gpcog.org/650/Regional-Trail-Plan>
 - P. Conlon update from 2/27 meeting:
 - Mostly reviewing maps on existing trail networks
 - Brief discussion of regional rail trails and bike trail landscapes

4.
New Business

- 4.a Communication Towers (re: 1999 Comp Plan, “Critical Natural Resources”)
- See: “Implementation Strategies” 4a, 4a1-4a3)
 - See also: York, ME and others
 - MERC smokestack is going to be taken down
 - The communication transponders need to go somewhere
 - Cell providers desire to have their own towers, but it is more productive to co-locate cell technology on a single tower — likely on existing infrastructure
 - The desire to remove this single tower could otherwise lead to the development of multiple other towers having similar impacts across the city.
 - It is highly desirable to have applicants pay tower funds into a pool, with the city hiring engineers to research and desire a functional tower system
- 4.b Collaboration with the Recreation Commission re: Clifford Park
- Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 31st at 6:00pm
 - Location: JR Martin Community Center, 189 Alfred Rd, Suite #1
 - BCC to bring cost estimates from forester to spur conversation around Project Canopy funding sources
 - Friends of Clifford Park are also resuming activity
 - Scheduled meeting 4/30 at 5:00pm at the Heart of Biddeford office
 - E. Heumiller to represent BCC during these meetings
 - APEX starting a Youth Conservation Corp (4 crew members)
 - Ages 15-18, paid through partnership with state/federal agencies
 - Available to work on projects within Clifford Park and elsewhere within Biddeford as needed

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4.c Website Updates

- E. Heumiller to work with Danica Lamontagne to implement web updates
- Continued work to update the page can be done monthly, addressing new needs and new resources as they arise
- R. Rhames - desire to use the phrase “natural and working lands”
 - This is something from Gov. Mills task force
- Motion to approve: E. Heumiller, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous

4.d Walk & Talk with Maine Forest Service

- Event to include: District Forester, Oliver Markowitz will visit R. Rhames property to talk about invasive plants
- Date: Saturday, 4/26
- Time: TBD, but likely around 1pm
- E. Heumiller to share info with City Staff to include within upcoming Biddeford Beat newsletters

4.e Earth Day “Gone Micro”

- Biddeford Rec. — Clifford Park Cleanup, 9a-12p on Thu. 4/24
- Sustainability Committee — City Cleanup, 10a-1p on Sat. 4/26

5.

Other Business

5.a UNE Students looking to interview BCC members for marsh restoration project

- The project is being led by Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge team and UNE professor, Dr. Pam Morgan
- Looking to talk to individuals about their experience related to Biddeford Pool and the salt marsh
- Goal is to learn how they can best communicate with people about the restoration work as it proceeds

5.b Water Quality Monitoring Season

- E. Heumiller is prepping data loggers for the season
- Anyone interested in getting trained on equipment and helping to collect sample data can contact erik.heumiller@biddefordmaine.org
 - We need to recruit 3-5 volunteers to assist E. Heumiller
- Maine DEP training sessions are available:
 - Full Virtual Training — Wednesday, 4/23 — 7:00-8:30pm
 - Refresher Virtual Training — Thursday, 4/24 — 7:00-7:45pm
 - Virtual sessions will be recorded for later viewing
 - New volunteers also need to participate in an in-person training

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- 5.c Maine Coast Heritage Trust — Point of contact?
 - Jane Arbuckle was the previous steward, but she retired
- 5.d Landowner Mailer: 30+ Acre Parcels
 - E. Heumiller compiling the list (30% complete), to be completed by our April meeting
 - Mailer to include information on:
 - Family Forest Carbon Plan
 - Project Canopy
 - Local Land Trusts (SVLT, MCHT, etc.)
 - NRCS Program Details
 - Asking people to share their email with us for future correspondence
 - Can inform Comp Plan work for “working landscapes”
 - E. Heumiller to share draft mailer text before April meeting
- 5.e Maine Association of Conservation Commissions
 - <https://www.meaccme.org/>
 - Our membership may have lapsed
 - Motion to rejoin: D. Rioux, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous
- 5.f Conservation Commission interested in City of Biddeford advertising
 - E. Heumiller to inquire with Danica Lamontagne

6.
Adjourn

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Motion to Adjourn: E. Heumiller, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous