

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission
May 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

Attendees:

Richard Rhames, Erik Heumiller, Denis Rioux, Patrick Conlon, Peter Robbins

Staff:

Adi Iriqat, Assistant Planner

Guest:

n/a

Call to order: 6:41 pm

1.

Adjustment(s) to Agenda

2.

Secretary Report

2.a Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 23rd, 2025 to take place in June

3.

Updates & Discussions

3.a Clifford Park Matters (Rec. Comm. collaboration, Project Canopy)

- Clifford Park Working Session
 - BCC attended the Rec. Commission meeting on 4/28
 - City staff Erika Dube took notes
 - Many funding sources on hold due to Federal cuts
 - Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds are frozen, but could be available for this in the future
 - L. Thompson has picked up the conversation with Jan Santere at Project Canopy

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission
May 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

- 3.b Comp Plan Update
- BCC to have two weeks (along with other department heads) to review and identify areas we want to contribute to within the Comp Plan
 - BCC to schedule a workshop to review once it is delivered
 - Adi anticipates sharing it with the BCC the week of June 2-5
- 3.c Discussion: IFW Map — Rezoning Map — Mark Ward Consulting
- M. Ward shared a memo with the BCC
 - Identifies the need to protect turtle habitat in this parcel/region
 - Declares that turtle habitat protections have “umbrella benefits” for a broader set of wildlife and plants
 - M. Ward to review the revised plan from late April
 - Adi to send to R. Rhames
 - Revise the memo as needed
 - The Bedard Subdivision should trigger a site law review (32 acres)
 - The BCC feels that the Planning Board should consider the IFW habitat map and the need to avoid developments that fragment access to this habitat
- 3.d Swan Pond Lot - Conservation Easement (Map-1, Lot-19)
- No updates to report
- 3.e BCC Website
- Issues uploading the assets — working with City staff to remedy
 - R. Rhames to secure videos (tapes) from older conservation programs that we can add to YouTube/website
 - Steve Poulis/True Green - has a video of the walking tour of the Claire property
 - Motion to reimburse full costs w/ shipping: P. Robbins, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous
- 3.f Invasive Species Walk & Talk Event - Debrief
- The walk took place on April 26, 2025 at 10 West Loop Rd, Biddeford, ME
- 3.g Clifford Park Signage — Updates
- Signs were purchased and deployed in the park
 - Planning to collect the signs in the coming weeks
 - E. Heumiller needs to process a reimbursement for the signs

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission
May 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

3.h Water Quality Sampling — Updates

- In-Person training scheduled for two upcoming dates
 - Sat. 5/31 at 10:00 AM — Clifford Park
 - Thu. 6/12 at 3:00 PM — Clifford Park

3.i BCC Budget for Y25-26

- BCC still looking for clarification on what our budget will be and if we need to, or have a chance to, request funds

4.

New Business

4.a SVLT “Grassland Birds/Habitat” Event

- Featuring: Joy Roy, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
- Date: Sunday, June 1, 2025
- Time: 1:00 PM
- Location: Hutchins Donation, Oak Ridge Rd.
- [News Center Maine story](#) (R. Rhames)
 - Noting that it is unclear if this “protection” is any permanent type of conservation protection, or an “at will” endeavor for Poland Spring

4.b Climate Analysis

- [The Guardian article](#) (R. Rhames)

4.c Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP)

- Provides funds for the restoration and protection of wetlands, streams, and wildlife habitat
 - It is a compensatory mitigation program
 - Has several considerations that need to be met
 - Details in the [Request for Letters of Intent](#)
- Applications for funding open as of May 22, 2025
- Deadline for LOI is June 26, 2025
- Potential projects could be:
 - Snow dump along Thatcher Brook
 - Vernal pool complex (restoration or land acquisition)
 - Swan Pond Brook area

City of Biddeford
Conservation Commission
May 28, 2025 at 6:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

5.
Other Business

5.a Student Inquiry — Saco River Water Quality

- A Biddeford student interested in water quality concerns on the Saco River has reached out to inquire about opportunities to improve the water quality.
 - Concerned about the health and safety of fish consumption
 - Heard of multiple sections of the river being closed for bacteria
 - Suggests replanting trees in recent areas of construction along Mechanics Park
 - We could identify issues and challenges to water quality to help inform students and the community
 - Forest Green Apartments are on hold due to sewage capacity concerns along the river
 - Development within the flood plain creates contamination risks
 - BCC recommendations and next steps:
 - BCC could pursue partnerships with local organizations to fund a native plant/tree restoration effort along the river corridor
 - BCC could inquire with Maine Water about current test results
 - BCC could reach out to IFW for any updates about fishery closures due to bacteria
 - Reach out to the Saco River Corridor Commission to provide additional information to the student

5.b Public Works - Snow Dump & Road Salt

- R. Rhames to reach out to the Public Works Director to have him join a BCC meeting to discuss the City's road salt usage

5.c Public Access Video

- Conversation about the importance of live broadcast and public access
- <https://www.biddefordmaine.org/2184/Public-Access-Television>

6.
Adjourn

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Motion to Adjourn: P. Robbins, Second: P. Conlon, Vote: Unanimous