

DRAFT
Calais Conservation Commission Minutes
1/6/2016 - Calais town office

Present: Mat Barewicz, Larry Bush, Julie Hand, Stephanie Kaplan, Drew Lamb, Neal Maker (recorder), Grant Ornstein

Guests: Richard Maizell, Matt Peters

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.
- December meeting minutes were discussed and approved with amendments.
- The conservation fund's balance is \$76,494.99 as of 11/30/15.

- Matt Peters gave an update of his work on the town natural resources inventory.
 - In the spring of 2015, Matt mapped the town's wetlands remotely. He assigned provisional natural community types and wetland classifications to the features he mapped and identified priority areas for field visits. In September and October he visited seven of those eight priority areas. He was unable to visit one of them because he did not have landowner permission. In his fieldwork, Matt found 16 new state significant natural areas and documented many rare and uncommon species occurrences. Most of the rare and uncommon species he observed were wetland plants. Drew has a summary of Matt's work, which he will edit for inclusion in the Town Report.
 - Matt hopes to complete a full report of this year's work by the end of January. This will include descriptions of the natural communities and a map of the town wetlands. In addition to showing numerous wetlands that were previously unidentified, the new map will correct errors that Matt found in the state's existing wetland map. His report will conclude Phase 1 of the inventory.
 - A public meeting will be scheduled in February so residents can hear about Matt's findings and ask questions. Stephanie will look into using the East Calais Community Center for the meeting and will coordinate with the Selectboard to schedule it. Several possible dates were identified. Matt will write a blurb to advertise the meeting and send it to Stephanie so she can post it on Front Porch Forum.
 - Phase 2 of the inventory will take place this year, pending town funding. No one on the Commission was sure if the funding request will be included in the town operating expenses article or if it will appear in a separate article at town meeting. Stephanie will find out and write a summary of Phase 2 for the warning if needed.
 - Matt shared his thoughts about the various natural resources he could explore during Phase 2 and asked for input from the Commission on what his priorities should be and on how his findings will be used by the town. Commission members will consider these questions and discuss them at the February meeting, which Matt is able to attend.

- Stephanie reported on the Selectboard's recent hearing on proposed zoning changes, which have gone back to the Planning Commission for editing.

- The Commission's working groups reported on their progress.
 - The Riparian Area & Shoreline Conservation group was working closely with the Lakes and Streams Committee earlier in 2015. They expect to meet this month to plan their next steps.
 - The Town Forest Planning & Management group has a rough draft of the forest management plan for the Bliss Forest. They will continue to work on the plan and hope to walk the Bliss Forest this winter to make sure the new trail signs are clear.

- Discussion of other upcoming projects was postponed until the February meeting.

- An executive session was voted in at 9:06 to discuss a confidential real estate matter and was concluded at 9:20. No actions were taken.

- The next meeting is scheduled for February 3rd at 7:00 pm at the town office.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.