

Calais Conservation Commission Minutes
16 March, 2023
Calais Town Office and Zoom
Approved 5/3/2023

Calais Conservation Commission (CCC) members present in Town Office: Stephanie Kaplan, Larry Bush, Mark Brown
CCC member Via Zoom: Julie Hand
Guest present in Town Office: Scott Bassage (recorder)
Guests Via Zoom: Noreen Bryan, Denise Wheeler

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

- Additions to Agenda:
 - Curb Cut Ordinance, Stephanie. Stephanie explained what happened with the Selectboard, that they didn't adopt it although they strongly supported our work on it, and she read the Resolution about the curb cut ordinance that the Selectboard adopted on March 6.
 - Bernie Paquet, Stephanie. Brief discussion about his letter requesting support for an Invasives Day. Larry said the deadline for this has passed.
- Approve Minutes
 - The commission approved the minutes of February 9th, 2023. (Bush, Brown)
- Elect Officers
 - Stephanie said she does not want to be Chair anymore, after more than 15 years on the CC including 9+ years as chair. Election deferred until all CCC Members are present
- Shoreland Zoning revisions
 - Working from documents from Noreen Bryan showing PC revisions and the suggestions previously made by the CC and CL&PC
 - Discussion:
 - The revised Planning Commission draft has been substantially improved with many very good provisions.
 - There are still several issues that the CC wanted changed but haven't been. The major ones are as follows:
 - The 250 foot buffer should be increased to 500 feet, based on experts' belief that more species are protected within a 500-foot buffer.
 - The 15% slope is too steep and should be reduced to 10% maximum.
 - The PC's revision prohibits mowing for new development after 2025 but they still allow forever mowing if SK check
 - Will the CCC tell the selectboard that CCC supports the current draft

- Larry’s motion, as amended:
 - That the CCC supports the Planning Commission’s overall revisions to the shoreland zoning regulations, but reserves the right as a body and as individuals to comment on the provisions addressing slope and mowing that are potentially worthy of further refinement.
 - Seconded by Stephanie.
 - Passed unanimously.
- Further discussion
 - The Planning Commission will meet March 21st.
 - The CCC will wait to send the approved motion to the Selectboard until the Planning Commission has approved their final draft.

Noreen was sincerely thanked for all the work she has put into the shoreland zoning changes and especially for her clarity in explaining the changes and comparing them to various suggestions that had been made by the CC and CL&SC

- Plan for Dealing With Invasives
 - The Selectboard had included \$15,000 from ARPA funds for a study of invasives but it is not clear whether these funds continue to be available after the previous selector realized it may have made commitments for the ARPA funds that exceeded the amount available.
 - Stephanie read Neal’s email about identifying species:
 - “I have been thinking about invasives. If you talk about that tonight, my two cents is that we should take an organized approach to thinking about what plants are in town and where our control efforts would be most effective. I pulled together a list of all the invasives that are documented in Calais on iNaturalist. I can share it at our next meeting.” The CC members agree with Neal’s approach.
 - Discussion about Phragmites and the need for a town-wide survey.
- 8:23. Motion to adjourn. Bush, Brown

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 3 (Larry’s birthday)

To Do List: Find out if - after holding a public hearing on the revised shoreland zoning regulations - the selectboard decides there should be changes, can they make the changes and then approve the document, or must they send the document back to the planning commission for them to make the changes? (Stephanie)