

Conservation Commission
Minutes
September 18, 2009
6:30 PM

ATTENDEES:

Jo Schumann, Jean Perkins, Gloria Barnes, Ellen Winchester

MINUTES/COMMUNICATION:

Jo: apologized for all the emails, especially from MEACC.

Since there is no email for Dana maybe we could print out the minutes and send them to him?

GEOCACHING:

Ellen: talked about Geocaching. Joined the official geocaching website, <http://www.geocaching.com/> Entered our zip code and found at least a dozen geocaches in or very near Phippsburg and another dozen not far at all. Read about different kinds of geocaches. Thought our best bet would be a “multi-cache” which we could set up like a scavenger hunt somewhere on the town land. Since I like puzzles I thought I might add a puzzle component to the set of caches in our geocache. We will need to purchase or find: weather-tight containers for each cache, log books for each cache, little trinkets that people can trade in our cache. The website suggested that we average about three GPS readings for each cache location since all regular GPS hand-helds have a built-in error of plus or minus 30 feet. We also need to come up with hints to help people find each cache. The caches can be under or behind or in things or in plain sight but I don’t think burying them is allowed. I definitely want one cache to be at the cellar-hole. I thought we might have a big box there with a large log book where we could encourage people to imagine who lived there and what the house looked like. Periodically we could even scan in the pictures and stories and post them on our website. Jo and Jean and Gloria offered to help with “shopping”. Ellen will work on figuring out spots for caches. We will wait until the leaves fall so we can get the very best GPS readings without interference from the tree leaves.

Aileen: can give us some names of people in town interested in geocaching.

EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS:

Jo: received some posters from an MEACC letter. The posters concern a vector borne disease, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, transmitted by mosquitos. People are reminded to wear long sleeves and use repellent in mosquito-y areas. Outbreaks have occurred in the Berwicks and Union. The disease is rare in humans but very very serious. They are particularly concerned about the Common Ground Fair in Union. Jo printed out a poster. We will put them up at: Center Store, Post Office, Town Hall.

MILFOIL POSTERS:

Jo: Dana not here today but he was going to talk to Sportsmen’s Club. We are thinking about maybe putting signage at the two places where people launch boats into Center Pond reminding people to check their boats for milfoil. It is a VERY large sign. Paul Gregory with DEP has some signs and will save two of them for us if we want and will ship them to us. Maybe instead get an old road sign and make our own? Dana said maybe Sportsmen’s Club could help. We should get input from town’s people. We decided to ask Dana to take it up with Sportmen’s Club and find out their recommendation. We will hold off and talk with more people in the community but will revisit the idea in the Spring.

BUDGET UPDATE:

Jo: Should we join MEACC for another year \$125 for Phippsburg?

Jean: How is our budget?

Jo: The budget is fine. I don't remember about reimbursing Ronnie. Is 4/7 a quorum? Yes. MEACC alerts us to a lot of important things that are going on. Gloria made a motion to join. Ellen seconded. Unanimous.

Jo: In an email(?), Mike pointed out that Open House in December is on the date of our meeting. Is Friday a good night for us to meet? Friday nights are not great in the summer. Afternoon was fine but Dana cannot come to that.

Jean: Let's think about not meeting in December.

Jo: Good idea.

Gloria: Let's leave it at this time for October.

Jo: Yes, at least for October.

INVASIVE SPECIES UPDATE:

Jo: There are phragmites on rt 209. They take over a whole marsh and crowd out native plants. One of the worst invasives. Federal stimulus money is available to spray the phragmites for two years. Mike (something) is coming next week to spray. Ron Joseph arranged this. He sent nice a email about leading a Maine Audubon moose call.

WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS UPDATE:

Jo: Regional information workshop: Conservation 101 in Augusta 23rd 5:30-7:30.

Jo: How to create a wildlife-friendly back yard workshop to be held at Curtis Memorial Library on Sunday September 20 at 1:00.

Jo: There have also been informational meetings about windfarms. One was held in Wiscasset. Augusta is wanting to set up 2-3 locations offshore to test out windfarm technologies. Do we have any position on offshore windfarms? Should we? There are basically two camps. Those against it: mainly aesthetic. Fishermen: wonder if they might affect fishing.

Jean: Bob has been researching and he should carry the ball.

Jean: Cool Communities is working with UMA and having a workshop on October 3rd in Augusta carried by satellite to the other UME sites. Bill McKibben and John Kerry participating. Starts with house energy efficiency and solar information. I might be interested in going at least to pick up literature, e.g. those efficient lights going in Woolwich school.

Gloria: I cannot attend.

Jo: Ronnie might like to go.

Jean: I will forward the email to about the workshop to Jo.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

Gloria: I have a copy of article from Portland Press Herald about MEACC written by Keith Fletcher that I'd like to share and recommend people read if they haven't. He says that Conservation Commissions in Maine have been invigorated by MEACC. Mainers love their towns and cities and generally prefer to get together locally. The idea of a local Conservation Commission allows each town to decide for themselves what is important to them. For example, Wells decided to invest funds in conservation lands. The town of Wayne did vernal pool mapping. Conservation Commissions have worked on projects related to town forests, invasive species, etc. "We should wish this new Conservation Commission movement God speed." Success depends on the support of the 488 municipalities. Townspeople are encouraged to volunteer.

Jo: that's all I have. The meeting was adjourned.