

**Bar Harbor Conservation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 8, 2023**  
**Bar Harbor Town Hall - 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**5:00 - 7:00pm**

**I. Call To Order/Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

Existing members present: Acting Chair and Secretary Jacquie Colburn, Christian Barter, and Ted Koffman. New members Lucian Smith and Lars Larson were welcomed to the Commission. All members introduced themselves and took a few moments to describe their backgrounds and interest in serving on the commission. Mr. Smith and Mr. Larson asked some questions and shared some thoughts on various issues affecting Bar Harbor.

Mr. Smith, who resides on Crooked Road, expressed concern regarding the excessive speed which vehicles travel on Crooked Road, making it unsafe for bicycles or pedestrians. He talked about PFAs (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in sludge, where may they exist because of sludge application, what testing is being done, and by whom. Mr. Smith was concerned about a solicitation he recently received in the mail from a company who offered to lease a portion of his property and clear cut it for the installation of a solar array. He said that removing trees is contrary to the effort to provide alternative energy sources and questioned the profits earned by private companies versus benefits to Maine residents by such activities. Mr. Smith asked if an AQI (air quality index) monitor could be installed downtown to obtain air emissions data.

Mr. Larson, who resides in town said that it would be useful to connect the shared use path (along Eden St.) to Cottage Street and to provide better signage directing bicyclists in and around downtown. He too expressed concerns regarding vehicular traffic and suggested that making Cottage Street to Main Street to Mt. Desert Street a one-way loop might improve safety for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. He also questioned whether a portion of Main Street could be pedestrian only.

**II. Excused Absences**

There were no excused absences.

**III. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

**IV. Review of the Agenda**

The members reviewed the agenda, no revisions or additions were made.

**V. Review of Workshop Notes**

The April workshop notes were reviewed, no revisions or additions were made. The May and June workshop notes were not prepared so they were not reviewed.

**VI. New Business**

• COA Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Research Projects

- Opportunities to collaborate with COA

Members reviewed the student's presentations and expressed the desire to meet with COA staff and students at an upcoming meeting to determine what projects could be cooperatively undertaken to address some of the issues illustrated in the presentations.

• Follow-up to Prior Commission Workshop Discussions

- Groundwater and well capacity; invasive species; bicycling access

While bicycling access and invasive species were discussed at other times during the meeting, time did not allow for a discussion pertaining to groundwater and well capacity.

• Other Topics of Interest/Concern

Ms. Colburn mentioned the email received from the Climate Emergency Task Force inviting the commission to a recent meeting of the Task Force. Ms. Colburn also mentioned that she had recently spoken with Jesse Wheeler (former CC Chair) and ANP Vegetation Program Manager about future partnerships with ANP. Mr. Wheeler suggested the possibility of working on Town properties and at the Connors Emerson School reconstruction to involve students in planting native species.

## **VII. Ongoing Business**

- Commission Membership

Ms. Colburn said that with 5 members the Commission has an official quorum, but it would also be nice to have some younger members such as COA students. She spoke with Liz Graves, Town Clerk, and she confirmed that students need to be residents to serve in an official capacity on the Commission. Further, Ms. Colburn recently spoke with Michele Gagnon, Town Planner, and she indicated that upon the addition of Planning Department staff the department would then have the capacity to provide greater assistance to the commission. Ms. Gagnon would like the commission to develop a work plan and make an annual update to the Town Council.

- Commission Budget

Ms. Colburn said that to her knowledge the Commission's budget has not changed and it stands at \$500.

- Commission Work Plan

Ms. Colburn reviewed the Five-Year Plan of Proposed Activities document with the members. Mr. Smith stated that the new Comprehensive Plan can and should be used to advocate for change. The members agreed that at the next meeting they would identify one or two priority projects for the coming year.

- Update: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Ms. Colburn said that the CPC did not meet in June, but it did meet in July and the following was discussed: The feedback from the four public Visioning Sessions held in May was reviewed and discussed. Generally, the session attendees selected Option 2 for the proposed future land use, and they had many comments/suggestions regarding the proposed Vision Statement. The committee is presently working on a revised Vision Statement to incorporate some of the comments and suggestions.

Planning Department staff will engage committee members in a review of the goals and strategies from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The intent is to determine which items have been addressed or are no longer relevant versus which should be carried forward, and if so, are there new actions to include in the 2035 Plan. Ms. Colburn said that she has signed up for two focus groups: Conservation and Parks and Recreation.

- Update: ANP Great Meadow Restoration Project

Mr. Barter provided an update as to the work that the NPS has performed to date. In addition, he described how the NPS wants to develop a more viable connector to/from the Great Meadow and the nearby residential neighborhoods. The long-term plan is to not only restore the Great Meadow to a functional freshwater wetland system with improved hydrological conditions, but to make the area more accessible for pedestrians and vehicles traveling on the Park Look Road. Ms. Colburn asked if any water quality testing was done or will be done in Cromwell Harbor Brook.

## **VIII. Items for the Next Agenda**

Ms. Colburn said that at the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting the members should elect officers for the upcoming year, those positions include: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Since she has been serving as Acting Chair and Secretary, she asked members to please consider serving in some capacity.

## **IX. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:08pm.

*Respectfully submitted, Jacquie Colburn, Secretary*