

Draft
CHARLESTOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
January 26, 2021, 7:00 PM
TELEPHONIC AND/OR VIDEO REMOTE REGULAR MEETING
LOCATION:

<https://charlestownri.webex.com/charlestownri/onstage/g/php?MTID=e701f058303fa73da1bcf00eae7a1c9ca>

OR Dial: 1-844-992-4726 Meeting Number: 132 344 7663 Meeting Password: ctown4540

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by L. Macalister, Chair.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Present: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin, S. LaRose and R. Thieke. Excused: G. Gardiner and K. Simoneau.
- III. **WELCOME NEW COMMISSION MEMBER:** L. Macalister welcome Silvermoon LaRose as the newly appointed member of the Commission.
- IV. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Deb Carney, Town Council Vice President attended and also welcomed S. LaRose and also thanked R. Thieke for his years of service as a member of the Commission. Anthony. Feisthamel also attended.
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion to approve the minutes of November 24, 2020 made by L. Macalister. 2nd: S. Griffin. Aye: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin and R. Thieke Nay: None. Abstain: S. LaRose.
- VI. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Arnold Family White Cedar Swamp Preserve** – all appears to be in order.
 - B. **Charlestown Moraine Preserve**
 - a. L. Macalister and S. LaRose walked the trails and noted that a couple of trees need to be removed and work will be scheduled at next meeting.
 - b. Geocaching – K. Anderson feels that the trails are too up and down to make putting a cache on this Preserve a good idea.
 - C. **Patricia Sprague Forest Preserve**
 - a. Parking area has been looked at since trees removed and additional gravel has been put down.
 - b. Geocaching – K. Anderson reports that people are using it and indicate that they love the experience.
 - c. Brush cutting large field – C. Connery reported that Larlham will do it when conditions are sufficiently dry and that will include cutting down all the small pine trees. Those along the edges will be left for habitat.
 - d. Brush cutting small field – C. Connery will contact Larlham to get a quote to also cut the brush in this field. R. Thieke made a motion to spend up to \$1500 for this work. 2nd: C. Connery. Aye: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin, S. LaRose and R. Thieke. Nay: None.
 - e. Pines near amphitheater – consideration will be given at the next meeting to cutting down some of these trees to give a better river view provided it will not allow more erosion.
 - f. Dead trees near trails – L. Macalister, C. Connery and A. Feisthamel will check to see what work might be done and then ask Larlham to price the work.
 - g. Map in kiosk – L. Macalister will have a new map printed to replace the one there that has faded.

D. Richard Trails Preserve

- a. Geocaching - K. Anderson reported that there are two on this Preserve; one is in good shape and well used and the other needs some work,
- b. Tree down – C. Connery said he will take care of it.
- c. Kiosk – decided to explore having a kiosk made for this Preserve. C. Connery and S. LaRose will talk and see if they can get a volunteer to build it.

E. Schoolhouse Pond Preserve

- a. Road conditions – L. Macalister has talked to Public Works Dept about the road and they have it on their list of things to be done but do not want to make it too smooth as that would permit people driving faster. It was, however, noted by Commission members that some of the areas are really bad as is the entrance.
- b. Clean-up – DPW has cleaned up some broken glass but at next meeting there will be discussion and scheduling a work day to remove campfire site area and also cut down small trees near the head of the trail.
- c. Rocks along front parking area – D. Carney will look to determine whether the rocks on the border with the abutter have been moved into Preserve property further than they should.

F. South Farm Preserve

- a. Map in kiosk – L. Macalister will have a new map printed to replace the one there now which has faded.
- b. Widen trails – AllTrails has commented that the trails need to be reblazed (which L. Macalister has done). Also, a work day will be set to widen some of the trails.
- c. Birdhouses – some of these needed work and M. Macalister has rebuilt them.
- d. Barn door – it appears that the glue holding the door together failed and L. and M. Macalister have taken it and will repair and replace it.

G. Additional Old Business

- a. Blazing Trails – work day should be set to reblaze trails in all Preserves.
- b. Tools and signs in Barn – at next work day these tools should be removed and used as needed. “Open Space” signs will be used where appropriate.
- c. Friends of Conservation – L. Macalister asked if another Commission member will take over this contact list and S. LaRose will look into possible social media sites.

VII NEW BUSINESS

A. CRMC Notices – None

B. Posting signs on Preserves – there have been instances where this is done without permission. R. Thieke reported that this recently happened with a public service announcement and while those are OK, the Commission should be notified for their approval. Signs about lost items by individuals should be removed when seen.

C. Review of Town Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

- a. The Commission reviewed recommended changes to the rewrite.
- b. Motion by C. Connery to send to the Planning Commission and Town Clerk the following comments regarding the rewrite of the Town Comprehensive Plan.
2nd: S. Griffin. Aye: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin, S. LaRose and R. Thieke. Nay: None.
- c. 2-14 include Arnold Family White Cedar Swamp as it is one of the six properties in our heavily distributed Charlestown Open Space Properties brochure and it is also listed on the town website as well
- d. 2-21 discrepancy between total area (10,602/10,647)

- e. 2-27 in agreement of the necessity for a Town Resource Manager especially if the Town acquires more land. Conservation Commission should oversee this position.
- f. 2-34 Policy 1.1 Action 2 add Rank and assess the value of additional properties prior to purchase by the Town.
- g. 2-36 Policy 2.1 Action 1 add position of Town Resource Manager should be filled before any additional large parcels are acquired by the town.
- h. 2-38 Policy 2.3 Action 1 include development on the town website as well as brochures

D. **CRMC Public Access to the Rhode Island Coast Guide** – noted its availability

E. **Coastal Pond Commission Report** – L. Macalister reported that she is an e-officio member. The subcommittee on Public Use of the Salt Ponds is checking out Town owned properties to ascertain if any places provide a viable location for a boat launch site. D. Carney reported that she walked two narrow sites on Charlestown Beach Rd that connect to Ninigret Pond but they were too narrow and overgrown to be viable. L. Macalister will keep the Commission advised if any possible sites are identified.

F. **Council liaison and budget status**

- a. L. Macalister indicated to Town Council that the Commission did not feel the need to have a Council member assigned but welcomed the presence of members at our meetings.
- b. Budget – there remains a total of \$16000 in this year’s budget which will be drawn down when projects mentioned above are completed. D. Carney mentioned that the proposed budget for the next fiscal year allocates \$25000 to the Commission.

G. **Additional New Business - None**

VIII MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: L. Macalister and other Commission members thanked R. Thieke for his 15 years of service on the Commission.

IX ELECTION OF SECRETARY – Motion by C. Connery to elect S. LaRose as Secretary of the Commission. 2nd: S. Griffin. Aye: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin, S. LaRose and R. Thieke. Nay: None.

X ADJOURNMENT:
Motion by S. Griffin to adjourn. 2nd: C. Connery. Aye: L. Macalister, C. Connery, S. Griffin, S. LaRose and R. Thieke. Nay: None

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard N. Thieke, Secretary

Next regular Commission Meeting on February 23, 2021 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall or telephonic or video remote.