

MAY 2015 RCC

ROCKPORT CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 6, 2015

PRESENT: Ted Skowronski, chairman; Charlton Ames, select board; George Haselton, Bob Kennedy, Ron Howard, Lynn Bannister, James Francomano, planning and development director; Leticia vanVuuren, Knox County Emergency Management Agency

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM. The minutes from the April 1 meeting were approved.

PESTICIDES

George said that the use of pesticides is a polarizing issue. His suggestion was that we not make blanket rules. George thought that Tom Farley of Farley and Sons might be able to talk to the commission regarding organic lawn practices.

Ron said that the Maine Coast Heritage Trust property at Aldermere Farm uses some herbicides but does not spray or broadcast the herbicides. They follow standards set by the state. He commented that the water quality in Lily Pond has been so much better in recent years.

TREE PROGRAM

Ron has been in conversation with the Rockport Garden Club regarding a roadside tree program that would mimic the program Camden has been using for several years. In the Camden Tree Program, the town pays for 1/3 of the cost of the tree, the land owner pays for 1/3 and the Garden Club pays for 1/3. He is willing to grow root stock trees on the Erickson farm property to a height suitable for transplanting. He is prepared to do some fund raising, if necessary. The Rockport Garden Club Board is in favor of the project, but it has not yet been brought to the membership. All details are up for discussion.

Ron made a motion that the RCC endorse the concept of the tree program, in possible partnership with the Rockport Garden Club, in which trees would be planted on private properties along the roads and also on town owned properties. Bob seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

2015 COASTAL COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM

Bob presented the proposal he has been working on with James Francomano, Rockport's new planning and development director. This project would create a watershed model which would show the impact of land use activity on water quality. Leticia van Vuuren is the GIS guru from the Knox County Emergency Management Agency who would create the model.

The grant proposal identified four interrelated tasks that are designed to:

- identify and demonstrate such a decision making tool in the Goose River watershed. This

would tell us, for example, which of the critical areas are hazardous to the Goose River

- characterize NPS (non point source) loadings of nutrients and their impacts on the water quality of Rockport Harbor.

- assess potential best management practices (BMP) for reducing NPS loadings, such as creating buffer zones etc.

- provide actionable management information to local officials and the public.

The grant proposal is due May 15. If funded, the proposed budget would enable us to purchase our own instruments. However, it would require us to do more sampling on the Goose River. Bob handed out a sheet with proposed sampling dates starting June 3.

The RCC voted to endorse this project.

TESTING SEWER CONNECTIONS

Bob talked to Mike Young about inserting a camera into the sewers on a couple of properties - Pascal Hall and two homes at the bottom of Pleasant Street. This has not yet been accomplished.

TRAINING SESSION

The Volunteer River Monitoring Program's Annual Training Session is Thursday, May 21 at 9:00 in the Town Office and also at the harbor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30. OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE AT 7:00 ON JUNE 3. WE WILL MEET AT THE TOWN HALL AND GO RIGHT TO THE RIVER TO BEGIN OUR MONITORING SESSIONS.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bannister, Secretary