

Old Orchard Beach Conservation Commission Minutes

March 8, 2010

Members present: Pierre Bouthiller, John Bird, Linda Jenkins, Andrea Berlin, Mark Koenigs, Ginger McMullin

As of July 1, Memorial Park is no longer under the Conservation Commission

Addition to February minutes: Sharri MacDonald stated at the last meeting that the community garden issue would not reach the town council agenda in the near future.

50 Acre Wood: there has been an understanding that no final decisions would be made on this area until a planning process had been undertaken.

The acting town manager sponsored the community garden item on the agenda. He had agreed to it after understanding that it would be a temporary arrangement (would not necessarily have to continue next year).

Shawn O'Neil had brought up a safety issue. The Conservation Commission does not see that as valid considering the fact that school kids do beach clean-up and work stenciling sewer drains.

The Journal Tribune's editorial endorsing the council's decision was read. Pierre mentioned that the public cannot have unrestricted access to RSU during school hours, and reiterated the benefits of mentoring, learning, etc. that all would get from a community garden.

In response to a question from the public, it was clarified that grants for the garden had already been received. Further comments were that it would also be a benefit for adults and older individuals to have interaction with the students. It was also suggested that we should work on the community garden itself as opposed to the politics, and try to be less emotionally attached.

Erosion of the dunes from the February storm was discussed. Rather than do major "rehabilitation", it was decided to let natural reaccumulation of sand occur. It was noted that plovers would be returning at the end of the month, and disturbance should be minimized during this time.

Andrea is working with the Public Works interim director on checkerboard tables and pitanque court construction in Memorial Park. Bill will intersperse these projects with some other smaller ones he has in the park.

Pierre expressed a concern with drainage between Lucette & Lucerne (sp?) streets. It was discussed that some other towns require drainage plans for new construction. Scarborough has an ordinance on contractors doing similar work that should be looked at by the town.

Jean LeClerc gave an update on the anemometer. The installer is ready to go, but was held back by the storm. He is now busy working on storm damage, and another pole truck is not available. The deadline to have the tower up by February has been waived. There will be 24 hours notice before the tower goes up so some publicity can be done. People won't be able to get too close during construction because of safety concerns.

Andrea has had a huge response from the community over the council's decision to not allow community gardens at the 50 acre wood this year. Several members of the public at the meeting expressed their concerns, including a request that some middle ground be found. The question was asked if the entire 48

acres or so that was with the original ballpark would go to the proposed ballpark commission. It was noted that one acre could provide one hundred 18' x 18' plots. Others have also heard disappointment from citizens that voted to keep the property for the town that citizens aren't being allowed to use it.

Linda Jenkins noted that it was hoped that money raised from the ballpark could be used to help sustain the rest of the property.

It was noted that open public access is a requirement for many grant processes. There was concern that donations that have been given to date may be called into question.

It was suggested that the ballpark and garden issues remain separate.

The question was raised as to how the boundaries and acreage of the "ballpark" mentioned in the ordinance was determined.

It was suggested that perhaps if there was better communication between supporters and the council that more discussion might occur.

Sharri MacDonald stated her willingness to look at how this might be put on a future agenda.