

Yarmouth Parks and Lands
Meeting minutes
June 14, 2023

Committee members:

Karyn MacNeill, YCS Director
Erik Donohoe, Parks Specialist
Zoe Wolf, Council Liaison- abs.

Mary Thorp (2025)
Ron Dupuis (2024), chair
Vance Brown (2023)
Brian Caprari (2023)
Lisa Small (2025)-abs.
Joe Noel (2024)
Josh Royte (2024)-abs.

Guests: Mary Lou Michael, YCARE
Ron Siviski, Land Acknowledgement

Ron called meeting to order at 6:32pm.
Ron announced the new council liason would be Zoe Wolf.
Acceptance of minutes postponed until next meeting as a quorem was not present.

Planning Board Updates: Karyn

The current items by planning board are the 233 Grill renovation and the Madeline Pt. house addition.
Also, the committee is trying to connect with the public concerning the Comp Plan.

Land Acknowledgement:

Erik says a written statement is being prepared and introduces 2 guests who have worked on this- Mary Lou Michael and Ron Siviski.
Ron Siviski has been working on the Riverfront Woods trail names and says the work on this and with other interested parties has been inspiring.
Ron D. asks about the process.
Mary Lou from YCARE explains that this committee met and did extensive research. Then individuals compiled their thoughts and reached a consensus among board members. In Dec. of 2021, they met in the Royal River Park for a ceremony on the solstice. Ron S. adds that he has Maliseet ancestry. The core group of 6 with 3-4 other participants read the acknowledgement and felt a real connection to the land. Ron S. adds that it was a real tone-setter for the beginning of the meeting.
Ron D. states that the Maine Guides are starting to use an acknowledgement statement also. Wants to know what is next for our draft. The signs will eventually reflect the statement.
Erik said we need to decide on a final draft. Needs grammar check and a printed review.
Ron. D. wants to know what resources were available.

Ron S. says they met with language experts and utilized the Maine Historical Society, state resources and the local tribes. Ex. aucosisco is from the Abenaki Riverfront- where the river meets the woods

Karyn will move the article up to the top of group docs and states we need to send it on by fall. Committee will work on it in July and August meetings., get it cleaned up, and move forward.

Frank Knight Forest- Erik

Erik states that public comment largely concerned dogs and hunting. Suggests that the area near the Billings Property should be “dogs on leash” like Pratt’s Brook. Need back-up ordinance.

Ron D asks about a target date. Erik wants the draft approved by August to send to the council in Sept.

Mary remarks that dog issues seem to be the biggest touchstone.

Joe adds that “my rights end where yours begin” is a tricky situation. Also says that continuing sidewalks on East Main seems to garner strong support.

Is there a possible access from Brookside? However, residents there do not want hunters walking through with guns.

Karyn says access from Brookside is possible, but not for hunting.

Says there is a town hall scheduled for August 10th with new councilors, then scheduled workshops on Sept. 7 and Sept. 21.

Vance asks about the dog ordinance. Karyn says that they try to have something for everyone. Ex. Royal River is strictly dogs on leash, while a small part of Westside Trail is also.

Erik states that we need Riverfront Woods named in dog ordinance.

Mary says that while she loves dogs, most owners have a blind spot on how well trained they are.

Brian suggests “dogs on leash” in FKF should be done at the intersections near Garland property for clarity.

Vance suggests better notifications about pet policy.

Karyn says the paper version of open space notated the policies for different public lands. Erik could do an updates table.

Group agrees that the section in FKF should be “animals on leash”. There needs to be an ordinance change from council also.

Tree Committee: Ron reads Lisa’s report

Arbor day was a big success, but Karyn says that more tree planting and watering help is needed for future events.

The tree committee is continuing to review the tree ordinance.

Mary will speak to Chuck about possible Boy Scout help for the future.

Other Business:

Mary asks about the Blake skating pond water levels. Says that it used have a large number of spring peepers that are no longer heard. Karyn states that it is managed for vegetation and will check on the timing for the water level drop.

Mary announces that Eagle Scout Matthew Gilbert who did so much work on Yarmouth Park habitats, will be doing research in ornithology with a couple of Cornell professors this summer.

Karyn mentions that the weeping cherry in the Village Park is being replaced and that Latchstring Park is moving forward.

Joe says that Erik and his crew deserve kudos for their work on the Otter Trail.

Call for adjournment: Mary motions, Vance seconds. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.