

TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2011 at 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

Meeting Called to Order at 7:09 pm

Member Roll Call: Ginger McMullin, John Bird, Linda Jenkins, Patricia Holland, Mark Koenigs, and Pierre Bouthiller

Guests: Jim Bucar and John Andrews, Eastern Trail Alliance, and Elaine Vadeboncoeur, Saco Bay Trails

ITEM 1. Introductions

Introductions of attendees by the individual attendees; round table workshop style. Guests invited to give background history of Saco Bay Trails and Eastern Trail Alliance and to discuss trails in Old Orchard Beach.

ITEM 2. Review and approve minutes of September 12, 2011

Reviewed the September 12, 2011 meeting minutes. Mr. Bird provided edits. Ms. Jenkins moved to accept, Ms. Holland seconded. Approved unanimously, 5-0.

ITEM 3. Conversation with Saco Bay Trail and Eastern Trails. Possible Topics:

- a. Brief description of SBT/ET organizations and current projects.
 - b. Old Orchard Beach maps of open space/town land/possible trail areas
 - c. Thoughts on how fundraising/trail building are accomplished
 - d. Can organizations complement/join efforts on projects
 - e. Other ideas?
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- a. Ms. Vadeboncoeur, President of Saco Bay Trails (SBT) gave background on SBT organization. She gave a little history of how it started and covered the trails they own and manage in the Saco Bay Area that does include Old Orchard Beach and Ocean Park. Most of their trails are on City of Saco properties. They have a 5 year strategic plan. They are a full volunteer group. Trail maintenance and all fundraising is done by volunteers. No paid staff. They are a 501(c) (3) organization. Flagg Pond Road trails have no easements; the trails are on private property. Discussion of trails turned to Eastern Trail. John Andrews gave a brief overview of the start of the Eastern Trail Alliance. The Eastern Trail can be viewed as the backbone on the trail system. SBT and others to make the local trails that can be connected to and by the Eastern Trail. Eastern Trail Alliance was formed 15 years ago. The total length from Kittery to Portland is approximately 65 miles.

Discussed the issue of liability. John Andrews explained that Maine has good laws for the protection of property owners. It protects them from frivolous lawsuits from the general public that traverse on their land on trails. The Maine Dept. of Transportation is the major funder of the Eastern Trail. Discussed financial funding for trail projects. Local communities are typically asked to bond or pay for a portion of the project as “seed” money. Services “in-kind” for the Town’s Department of Public Works or just cash bond money. Grants may stipulate a certain number of volunteer hours at \$X/ hours are achieved to receive the granted funds.

- b. We then discussed connection from the Beach to Eastern Trail. We reviewed the resource and property maps. A couple of routes were identified as potential trails that used existing roads, shoulders, right-of-ways, and unmarked paths. Looked at starting from a downtown location to be near train station and Memorial Park, going up Heath or Staples Streets to Saco Avenue to School Street. At the paved end of School Street there is a path that looks to be located on the School Street Right-of-Way all the way to Dirogo Drive near the transfer station entrance gate. Then Wild Dunes Way to Ross Road and Ross Road to Pond View Road. Pond View Road ends in a cul de sac that is about 30 feet from the Eastern Trail.
- c. Reviewed Easements – legal and donation making for improvements.
Contacts – Gas Company – ET easement is owned by Biddeford & Saco Water Company.

Discussed relative to Eastern Trail connections:

Millbrook Industrial Park to Rt. 1 is connected to Eastern Trail.

FunTown – Ken Cormier – via Rt. 1 and Millbrook is connected to Eastern Trail.

Silver Spring Camp Ground is connected to Eastern Trail

Benefits gained from trails were explained by guests. They improve property values and make the community more attractive to those who are considering where to live and own property.

Bikes on train was reviewed and discussed. John Andrews pointed out that bikes can only be put on and off train at Portland, Wells and Boston North Station. Issue – time consuming for Amtrak to unload and load bikes out of the baggage car. Town of OOB – Planning on making upgrades to the OOB train station possibly year round stop and we should ask for bikes be allowed on special runs or periods or all the time.

- d. Easements – Approach property owners by non-profit leaders

Comprehensive Plan – 10 year horizon – pick a trail and do one.

SBT would be supportive and could be used as a resource for Old Orchard Beach to expand or construct new trails within OOB. Ms. Vadeboncoeur stated OOB is within Saco Bay Area.

A motion was made by Mr. Bouthiller to promote and encourage trails in OOB by Conservation Commission and seconded by Ms. McMullin. Discussion of the motion was held and ended with the motion being withdrawn by first and second so that the motion could be re-worded.

Motion by Mr. Bouthiller: The Conservation Commission vigorously supports the creation of and delineation of a spur trail system, initially originating at the Amtrak Train Station and connecting to the Eastern Trail. This will be in conjunction with and in cooperation with the Town of Old Orchard Beach admin/planning department, the Eastern Trail Alliance, Saco Bay Trails and any interested public and private entities.

Seconded by Ms. McMillin

Discussion: When trail is routed on the roadways we need to have the goal of being family safe so that parents and kids can ride along the shoulder of the road or on a sidewalk. Take roadway routes with low traffic volume and low speeds.

Bob Hamilin, Saco Town Planner, was recommended as a good source by Ms. Vadeboncoeur

Ginger and Mark agreed to take a bike tour to help locate our first trail route from Memorial Park to the Eastern Trail. Meeting for tour on Saturday, October 15, 2011 at 9:00 am and will take a GPS tracker.

ITEM 4. Other business

No other business discussed

Next meeting November 14, 2011 – 7:00 PM, location to be determined

Ms. Jenkins motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Mark Koenigs

Mark Koenigs, Secretary
(Approved on 11/14/11)