

Otisfield Conservation Committee Minutes
February 24, 2016

Call to order 7:10 p.m.

Members present: Susan Feller, Kristin Roy, Bob Blake and Maureen Mooney-Howard

Members absent: Lee Dassler.

New Business:

1. Recycling: Maureen expressed concern about the lack of plastic recycling in our town. She wondered if this is something that we as a committee can get involved in. She attended a workshop given by Eco-Maine of Portland. They do single sort recycling and work with towns to increase recycling. When they started ten years ago they had to buy new equipment, so it cost more for towns to be members that it does now. They have recently been able to give money back to their member towns. Bob mentioned that this is something we have looked into in the past and believes that the Selectmen have looked into this as well. We, however, never did follow up with the Selectmen. The Committee felt that this is an important conservation issue and we should speak with the Selectmen and go from there. Kristin believes that Lenny was the one who looked into this and that it wouldn't hurt for us to ask if they would like our help researching different options. Bob suggested that we could also have Eco-Maine come and speak with us. Susan said that she would like to know what Eco-Maine does with the plastics.

2. Vernal Pools: Kristin asked if we want to make plans for Big Night. Do we want to think about documenting frog migration? Bob will put up signs drawing attention to the large vernal pool near the kiosk at Two Ponds Nature Area. All members agreed it would be a good idea to put signs up about the vernal pool. Concerned about the possible harm to the vernal pool, Bob would like to mark a trail to the Vernal Pool and put up a rope so that people don't go in it. Susan expressed her concern about dogs popping around the Vernal Pool and contaminating it.

3. Lake Monitoring: Bob will monitor Little Pond for the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) for water clarity readings (Secchi readings). Susan mentioned that Little Pond does have migratory birds and a water fowl population and that it is found on the Habitat maps. Little Pond was counted in federal studies on wading bird habitat and shoreland bird habitat. It is listed on the habitat map for the town. Little Pond has a vast marshy area around it. Susan's concern is that people will find this attractive and then the town is going to have problems because the Pond cannot support too much activity.

4. Otisfield Planning Board/ Shoreland Zoning Ordinance: Kristin mentioned that the Planning Board is updating Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. She went to a Planning Board Workshop as a private citizen so she could get an idea about what changes are being proposed for the ordinance. One of the issues they are discussing is shoreland bird habitat and what setbacks should be required. She asked them (PB) if they had talked with any of the Lake Associations or if they were interested in talking with the Conservation Committee. She explained that Pixie (a biologist and botanist) has done so much work on documenting plants and water quality. Kristen feels that since Committee members like Susan know so much about bird habitat, that the Planning Board should ask as many knowledgeable people as possible for advice. Kristin wondered if there are areas in town that need to be protected and feels that just because the State hasn't looked at these things yet it doesn't mean we can't as a town look at these things more intensively and help make informed decisions.

8. Motion to adjourn at 8:30pm