

Town Commons Committee Minutes 3-18-25

- Call to Order at 5:00pm
- In Attendance: Dennis Wilson (town arborist), Jeremy Litchfield (chair), Mark Fochesato (vice-chair), Blaine Moore (secretary), Timothy Carr, Nathaniel Shed (town council), Michael Halmo, Mike Ferry, Jym St. Pierre, Caleb Chang (Brunswick High School), Bobin Park (Bowdoin College)
- New Member Introduction: Caleb Chang is a junior at Brunswick High School
- 2024-2025 Budget Review
 - \$1400 is allocated to the island redesign. The materials for the sign will be ordered this week, but it can take anywhere from 1 month to 6 months to be completed depending on the vendor's timeline. The plants should be ready to be planted by May 15.
 - \$400 is allocated for new chestnut tree saplings.
 - Remaining **funds are reserved for any last minute** emergencies, but will otherwise be spent on signpost materials if nothing else comes up.
 - The budget year ends on June 30.
- 2025-2026 and Future Budgets
 - Plan is to request the same amount this year. The town budget is estimated to increase at 3%, so there are caps in increases for most departments. The consensus is that our budget should be safe, but some of the higher expenditures should not be expected until the '26-'27 budget year at the earliest.
 - Quick overview of future budget expenses.
 - The natural resource/management plan may be included in the Climate Action Plan, but that may not be for 5-10 years.
 - The town has an employee (Jessica) who will be able to help us create the new trail map internally.
 - We are currently waiting on the DEP report regarding our adoption of the goat trails. We should keep an ear out for when the frogs begin croaking **so that Dennis can contact our contact at the DEP to come examine the** vernal pools. Ideally we will have an initial indication from the DEP by the end of May, though the final report will likely be later.
 - There is an updated brochure for the Brunswick Town Commons with the exception that we are waiting to print it until we have a new trail map.
- Quarterly Brunswick Town Commons Newsletter Proposal
 - Bobin proposed that the Town Commons Committee release a quarterly newsletter, which evolved out of our previous conversation about hosting a social media account but requiring town employee involvement.
 - The newsletter would have an easier approval process for content and would be easier to handle the distribution with town resources.
 - Bobin shared a proposed layout with some updated information and with some placeholder text.
 - The proposed approval process would be to first go through the Town Commons Committee, then through Parks & Rec (possibly with other town stakeholders the first time), and then the Parks & Rec marketing department would take over distribution once it was ready to publish.

- There was a discussion on whether it should be digital only or include a print version; the sentiment seemed to lean towards a print version that was 2 pages long (front & back of an 8.5x11 sheet of paper) and published between 2 and 4 times per year.
 - Content could include volunteer opportunities, historical notes, accomplishments of the committee, photos of the Town Commons, and related items.
 - The newsletter should explicitly mention the town name of Brunswick as part of it's branding (and not just "Town Commons").
 - Homework: The committee should send suggestions for Bobin to include in the first newsletter to approve at the next meeting, with the goal of sending out the first issue in May.
 - Dennis will share the example draft with town directors to make sure there are no bottlenecks or surprises that will delay publication.
- Trail Mapping Updates
 - Mark has notes ready to share and will send them to Jeremy by end of week.
 - Jeremy demonstrated a sample map he has been working on.
 - Our initial draft proposal should have a list of trails, including names and numbers.
 - The committee goal should be to have the map ready to vote on by our September meeting, so we can begin working on our proposal and get additional stakeholder approval through the winter and begin on-site work next Spring.
 - Part of the process for testing our maps should be to have individuals unfamiliar with the trail system try and navigate using the map and without any additional aid. Good candidates would be high school students.
- Community Announcements
 - There is a coastal clean-up on April 5th. ([more information](#))
 - The Captain Fitzgerald gravel pit report is going before the council next month and will potentially open new trails for public use. ([more information](#))
- Meeting Adjourned: 5:35pm