



Auburn, Maine

Conservation Working Group

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210
www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

Minutes - Tuesday, April 21, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 at Auburn Hall

1) Members present: Sam Boss, Dave Griswold, Jane Costlow, Carol Lane. Kathy Shaw, Lisa Rucollo with new members Michelle Melaragno (Life Forest Whistle Ridge), Lily Krietzberg (Seeds to Smiles), Lilit Mathieu (Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission)

After group intros, Sam gave a brief history of our working group for the benefit of new members.

2) Updates and **action items**:

- No Mow May and Pollinator garden expansion and updates. Michelle suggested more public outreach around people building pollinator gardens. There was a discussion about the future of planning educational signage and whether the city will provide funds for that. Sam mentioned possibility of reaching out to local businesses for donations to support the gardens project.

Jane will email Liz with reminder about NO MOW MAY.

Discussion of library pollinator education and activities we can plan for the Summer. Question whether Rhyanna is moving forward with the library garden this year. **Lily suggested an ongoing photo competition around pollinator garden with possible entry into a raffle for a prize, she will look into planning this.**

- Public works event planned in late May “touch a truck” .Question arose of the date and whether Conservation plans to have a table set up there? Jane was enthusiastic about this event and hoping we can participate again.

- Earth Day activities – Lisa mentioned the Optimists Clubs that have an earth day cleanup 4/22. Sam mentioned since we have support from public works, we should proceed with our annual earth day cleanup on May 2nd. **Sam will be working with Liz@ City to promote this event. All group members welcome to participate.** Lilit mentioned cleanup 4/22 10am at Basin Park (multiflora and garbage removal) which Dave said he would be attending.

- Sam gave a Littlefield dam removal update – City is reviewing contractors and the project goal is to finish removal by Summer’s end. It was suggested that we **plan a groundbreaking ceremony that our group can attend.** Jane mentioned that in conversation with Eric Cousins, there are other dam removals (upper and lower Barker) in the early stages of discussion, and it looks like they are moving forward. Sam reminded the group about goal of researching a location and **adding a boat launch on Little Androscoggin.** Carol reminded the group that there are funds and support for our group to **provide replanting/rewilding recommendations and guidance for after the dam removal.** Planning for this would need to begin ASAP. Carol suggested that perhaps indigenous Mainers could be brought in to that process. Sam mentioned we could contact the Bomazeen Land Trust for possible collaboration or recommendations. Lilit can contribute her live-staking knowledge to this project.

- Updates on City Comprehensive plan – Jane has been working on this, but ran out of time to update the group. Concerns voiced about land use as regards to waterways and open space, land conservation. The city is actively seeking input from the community! All **group members are urged to check out the current plan materials and provide input** [here https://engageberrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/plan-auburn](https://engageberrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/plan-auburn)

- Michelle brought up Dark Skies project and Chelsea’s application to become an urban night sky space. There is interest in a Dark Sky virtual event for May, brainstorming about documenting the event. **Michelle will email Liz about upcoming Dark Sky events.**

- Brainstorming –

Sam- **convening local conservation groups at a June or July event** for networking and brainstorming@Baxter Pub event space. Lily working on a pollinator project w Baxter and it would be great to combine the debut of the pollinator spaces with this conservation get-together.

Michelle – Community Conservation Conversations idea for a podcast? Short documentary? Instagram? getting people to say what conservation means to them.

Kathy – **May 15th** soil and Water district are distributing the plants from their plant sale; her farm, Morin and Openheart will all be participating by **selling seedlings** and other items on that date!

Dave- Currently will be planting chestnuts at the Pal Center. Talked about the idea of a “notable trees of Auburn” in the streets, similar to story in the streets.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Lane
Secretary