

TOWN OF ST. GEORGE, MAINE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

POLICY FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC PROCEEDINGS

(adopted _____, 2021)

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 403-B, and after public notice and hearing, the St. George Conservation Commission adopts the following policy to govern the participation by remote methods of members of the Board and the public in the public proceedings of the Conservation Commission. As used in this policy, “meeting” refers to any “public proceeding” of the Conservation Commission, as that term is defined in 1 M.R.S. § 402.

1. Remote Participation by Members Permitted in Certain Circumstances. Members of the Conservation Commission are expected to be physically present for meetings except when not practicable, such as in the case of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the Conservation Commission to meet remotely or an illness or temporary absence of a member that causes significant difficulty traveling to the meeting location. The Chair of the Conservation Commission, in consultation with other members if appropriate and possible, will decide whether and how to permit remote participation in as timely a manner as possible under the circumstances. A member who is unable to attend a meeting in person will notify the Chair of the Conservation Commission as far in advance as possible. If the Chair determines that it is not possible to give public notice of remote participation within the time required under 1 M.R.S. § 406, remote participation will not be permitted.

2. Remote Methods. Remote methods of participation may include telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information by which all members of the Conservation Commission can hear each other and may include other means necessary to accommodate disabled persons. Remote participation by text-only means such as e-mail, text messages, or chat functions is not permitted.

3. Remote Participation by the Public. Whether or not any member of the Conservation Commission participates remotely in a meeting, the public will be provided a meaningful opportunity to attend the meeting remotely, subject to exceptions provided by law such as for executive sessions. If public input is allowed or required at the meeting, an effective means of communication between the Conservation Commission and the public will also be provided so that all members of the Conservation Commission and all other persons attending the meeting in person or remotely can hear each member of the Conservation Commission and each other person who is recognized to speak.

4. Notice. Notice of all meetings will be provided in accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 406 and any applicable charter, ordinance, policy, or bylaw. When the public may attend by remote methods, the notice will include the means by which the public may attend the meeting remotely and will provide a method for disabled persons to request necessary accommodation to attend the

meeting. The notice will also identify a location where the public may attend the meeting in person. The Conservation Commission will not restrict public attendance to remote methods except in the case of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the Conservation Commission to meet remotely.

5. Availability of Documents. The Conservation Commission will make all documents and materials to be considered by the Conservation Commission available, electronically or otherwise, to members of the public who attend remotely to the same extent customarily available to members of the public who attend in person, provided no additional costs are incurred by the Conservation Commission.

6. Quorum and Voting. All votes taken during a meeting using remote methods will be by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, or heard if using audio technology only, by other members of the Conservation Commission and other persons attending the meeting. A member of the Conservation Commission who participates remotely will be considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

7. Effectiveness. This policy will take effect immediately and will remain in force indefinitely unless amended or rescinded.

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CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

As Chair of the St. George Conservation Commission, I certify that this policy was adopted by the Conservation Commission at a meeting held on the date appearing in the heading, following due notice and a public hearing.

Ken Oelberger

Signed _____, 2021