

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

August 17, 2020

ZOOM MEETING, 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffatt, Chair; Diane Morgan, Treasurer; June Cook, Secretary; Susie Houston, Select Board Liaison; John Brodhead, Farley Brown, Carol Maroni, Ashley Nunery, Elinor Osborn, Heidi Rich

MINUTES: July 20, 2020 minutes approved as presented.

INVASIVE DISPOSAL UPDATES: Elinor continued investigation with Casella on the disposal of invasive plant material for landowners, costs, protocols. The last message was received from Scott Sampson. He indicated the commission would need a dump truck and a certified driver holding a VT Solid Waste Permit to truck invasives to the landfill. He suggested hiring a trash hauler. Whether it would be possible to use town truck and find a driver was discussed but dumping fees would still have to be paid.

The commission does not have funds to hire a trash hauler, dump truck, or certified driver holding a VT Solid Waste Permit. Stephen made the executive decision to drop the commission's plan to hold a collection of plant invasives and haul to the landfill. Elinor notified the seven people that the commission would not be collecting plant invasives as the landfill had given very restrictive rules and it would be prohibitively expensive, but transfer stations are authorized to take plant invasives.

Casella is treating plant invasives as hazardous waste. Elinor inquired if Casella could make it easier for homeowners to dispose of invasive plant material and Sampson indicated he would look into it.

Carol indicated her research a year ago on double bagging and disposing invasives in the landfill was considered unsafe as bags could tear, plant material could sprout, and invasive spread elsewhere. Discussion whether taking invasives to landfill by landowners was safe or not was debated and if commission should be recommending it. The issue is invasive plant material is considered hazardous waste. Carol will research her notes.

Elinor reported that next Spring, at the Japanese Knotweed demonstration site, the Conservation Commission will consider trying the latest control measure, which is covering knotweed with wire mesh.

AQUATIC PLANT SESSION: Heidi reported on the session that she and Ashley attended at the Outdoor Center. Also present were John and Susie. John assisted in plant identification. The session included identification of nonnative Eurasian milfoil and a native coontail, which looks very similar to Eurasian milfoil. Not all plants are

invasive but are a naturally altering effect and create productive areas in the lake that are important ecologically.

John said the Center has invested actively and heavily to remove Eurasian milfoil from Big Hosmer through mechanical methods. Eurasian milfoil first showed up on Eligo, a heavy infestation occurred but has since diminished somewhat. Eligo control involved biological approach of using weevils as part of its clean-up, as well as, mechanical methods of pulling up the milfoil. The milfoil weevil was introduced before it became regulated by the State. The weevils originated in Vermont, were cultured out of state, but the State does not allow the re-importation now. It is hoped that something similar with the diminishing of milfoil that's occurred at Eligo will happen at Big Hosmer.

BEE COURSE: Elinor attended an online bee course from North Branch Nature Center. There are 17 species of bumblebees in Vermont and some are disappearing. One bumblebee is on the state endangered list (no longer seen in Vermont) and one is one is on the state threatened list. . A highly recommended bee presentation by Kent McFarland of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14Ec_O3cbTNXsvfIUShY5v7wLW6il1iG7/view or <https://val.vtecostudies.org/events/recorded-events/>

TOWN WEBSITE: Stephen and June will work with Michelle to ensure commission meetings are on town website calendar. Stephen will see about placing postings on the website relative to commission. Members asked to think about what would be relevant to place on the website.

FACEBOOK – Farley will remove the FACEBOOK page.

IN-PERSON MEETING – SEPTEMBER: After discussion, it was agreed to meet by ZOOM with the meeting ID and Password available to the public.

STEVE WRIGHT MEMORIAL BENCH: Stephen reported an Aldo Leopold bench could not be secured through the school; however, he has spoken to Harry Miller and Dave Brown. Harry was interested in building one. Stephen will follow up.

June moved that the memorial bench for Steve Wright be placed on the Common. Diane seconded. Discussion ensued about how to secure, materials, weatherizing, etc. It was agreed the builders of the bench should make those decisions.

Farley moved the following quote to be placed the bench: “When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we begin to use it with love and respect.” Aldo Leopold, 1954. Motion seconded by Heidi and voted unanimously.

During the dedication of the bench, information about the quote from the Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold, would be elaborated on. Farley will contact Select Board; Diane will research cost of plaque; Stephen will discuss with Harry; John will

talk to Village Improvement Society. Hopefully, funds can be secured for bench and plaque.

The next meeting of the commission will be September 21 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM.

Submitted by June Pichel Cook, Secretary