

DRAFT CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

April 22, 2019
Craftsbury Town Hall

PRESENT: John Brodhead; June Cook, Secretary; Susie Houston, Select Bd Liaison; Stephen Moffatt; Diane Morgan, Acting Chair, Treasurer; Carol Maroni; Elinor Osborn; Steve Wright

ABSENT: Farley Brown

GUESTS: Heidi Rich

WELCOME: Diane welcomed Stephen and gave him a copy of the Vermont statutes pertaining to conservation commissions and a copy of the Commission's section of the town website. The Natural Heritage section of the Town Plan was written by the Commission and provides information to new members. Information about the Craftsbury Conservation Fund is on the town website.

The Commission publicly thanked former Chair Joe Houston for his years of service.

MINUTES: Minutes of March 11, 2019 meeting approved.

BOARD ELECTIONS: Elected Chair, Stephen Moffatt; Secretary, June Cook; Treasurer of Craftsbury Conservation Fund, Diane Morgan

REORGANIZATION OF COMMITTEES:

Knotweed Eradication Project: Elinor Osborn, Chair; John Brodhead, June Cook

Craftsbury Conservation Fund: Diane Morgan, Carol Maroni, Susie Houston (Select Board Liaison)

Garden for Wildlife Committee: Carol Maroni, Chair; June Cook, Heidi Rich (community volunteer)

Diane explained the Craftsbury Conservation Fund balance is \$1,711.01 (reported by e-mail). Donations are always welcomed and placed in the fund and are tax deductible. Cody and Emily of Thompson Family Farm donated \$500 from a dinner fundraiser held earlier in 2018. The Thompsons were publicly thanked; an acknowledgement letter will be sent to them. A process needs to be developed to ensure information is accurate, names and addresses of donors, complete; appreciation extended through acknowledgement letter. Diane noted that the commission may want to do more to raise funds. The Fund allows to the town to act on conservation related projects in Craftsbury.

Carol explained the Gardening for Wildlife (a.k.a. Pollinator Committee) and planting for wildlife or pollinator habitats, using native plants. The National Wildlife magazine has article/pictures explaining projects completed in other cities and towns. There is also a 2nd edition wildlife planting book that includes building habitat (such as rock piles and brush piles) as well as gardens. Demonstration type projects could be a similar process to the Knotweed Eradication Education Project. Suggested areas: Triangle at South Craftsbury/Creek Road; Community Green Space; roadside plantings. The projects could inspire others to do similar things used as teaching tool for children and provide beneficial and educational information to others.

June motioned to create a Gardening for Wildlife Committee to work with other town entities to establish wildlife and pollinator gardens and habitats. Diane seconded. After discussion the motion was approved.

Concerns were expressed about establishing too many committees with limited human resources and time. Carol felt conservation encompassed many avenues and establishing sub-committees was a good way to work on specific projects. Invasive species and how to eradicate has been one concern; how to promote wildlife and native species is the opposite side of the process. The desire is to create functioning, effective committees

Heidi expressed as a community member that many people are gardening and this was a natural twist to make it more beneficial in other ways.

The consensus was that the commission needs to work on a long-range plan. Diane reported a survey had been taken in the past to determine what the community felt were the priorities.

TOM ROGERS PRESENTATION: The Conservation Commission will sponsor a talk by Tom Rogers from Fish & Wildlife on Monday, May 20, in Sterling College Simpson Hall at 7:00 p.m. His talk will be on Vermont's wildlife and climate change. Press release to Chronicle, Gazette, and News & Citizen and weekly calendar –Stephen M. Posters – Elinor. Sterling College ENewsletter and Front Porch Forum, Farley. Posting of flyers – John, Diane. Town website – Diane.

Other Business:

Susie announced that naturalist Susan Sawyer would be talking at the Judevine Library on Monday, April 29, about the book, Mapping Vermont's Natural Heritage, published through Northern Rivers Land Trust.

Susie announced the Academy Woodlot Committee is holding a public forum in the Craftsbury Academy Common Room on May 15 after the community dinner. It is an information gathering session to seek input from the community. Orleans County Forester Jared Nunnery is making a forest management plan for the woodlot. The

woodlot of 78 acres has beaver ponds, wetlands, “fairie houses,” and interesting natural habitats and trails.

Discussion regarding important conservation commission readings/documents. centered on setting up a special place in the library for materials of interest regarding conservation, resources, i.e., National Wildlife Magazine, Mapping Vermont’s Natural Heritage. Susie will follow up on the idea with library director.

Elinor reported she will be checking to see if knotweed shoots are growing in the area where the chemical eradication project was done last year. The shoots should be cut and smothered in June. We will plan to use Rodeo on the untreated areas in September. Smother materials could be black plastic, cardboard, newspaper. Cuttings could be stored in black plastic bags, plastic grain/bird seed bags. Disposing of cuttings remains a problem. Best solution is to place in cement bunker to dry and then burn. If the chemical injection demo project has been successful, there should not be too many shoots. The sign will be put back at the site. Diane, Elinor, and John.

ATV Ordinance – Susie announced select board was holding a meeting on Tuesday, April 30 to revisit the ordinance with idea of having a trial period. No taskforce was created. The assumption is the signage to be placed at river crossings has been ordered and will be installed this spring. Speed limit signage for roads currently opened is to be installed as part of the new ordinance.

Heidi expressed she was willing to serve on the Commission.

The commission will meet on Monday, May 27, 2019, in the Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Potential agenda includes reports from Elinor (Knotweed); Carol (Wildlife Gardening); Susie (Signage).

Submitted by June Pichel Cook, Secretary