

DRAFT CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
July 29, 2019
Craftsbury Town Hall

PRESENT: Farley Brown, June Cook, Stephan Moffatt, Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Carol Maroni, Heidi Rich, Steve Wright

ABSENT: John Brodhead, Susie Houston

MINUTES: July 1 minutes approved as presented.

Discussion: Reviewed open meeting law as to posting agenda, adding items, and exchange of e-mails within committee. Information can be transmitted; however, discussion and decisions are in conflict of open meeting law. Discussion on holding meeting at 6:30 put on hold.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Knotweed Eradication Demonstration Project: Elinor reported the State does not have funds to help in replanting. Phase 3 of project is being discontinued as objections raised about using herbicide. Adjacent property to site has knotweed and eradication is difficult for property owners using chemical injection method. Project was designed to show the effectiveness of chemical injection, which has been demonstrated. Brochures at the project site are available to landowners. State lands at the site are steep and difficult to access to eradicate further. Cover plantings to replace the black plastic in area that has been treated is being researched. Site will be monitored and purple flowering raspberry is one possible ground cover.

Carol reported that Erika Karp in Greensboro has eradicated knotweed using industrial-strength vinegar. She noted that WonderArts Greenspace has knotweed and was agreeable to using their site as a demonstration site possibly using industrial-strength vinegar.

Gardening for Wildlife: Carol reported on collaboration with WonderArts which has funds to plant pollinators and enhance hedgerow for wildlife habitat and food. WonderArts is amenable to using their site as a demonstration site.

Carol Fairbank from WonderArts, Carol, Amelia Fritz, and Heidi planted all-native pollinator garden and staked for future planting and hedgerow. Planted Joe Pye Weed and Juniper. Plan is to reassess for more plantings in the hedgerow in the Fall, tweak for planting earlier Spring pollinators and later Fall pollinators. Next step is signage identifying all the five components of a Wildlife Habitat and marking invasives. Farley is teaching an intensive conservation class at the end of August and early September at Sterling with opportunity of students helping.

Conservation Fund: After extensive research, Diane, Carol, and Susie have written the Craftsbury Conservation Fund Guidance Document giving an overview of the Fund, mission, fund basics, fund management, fund activities, funding sources,

expenditures, project selection criteria, land protection criteria, assessment, selection process, and application. The document is a working document in draft form. Commissioners need to study and forward comments to the sub-committee. The draft was created after studying applicable Vermont Statutes and guidelines and documentation from other communities, then adapting to Craftsbury.

Based on 3 town surveys from the past and town plan, the fund criteria match the goals expressed through the surveys and what was considered as important to the town. The Craftsbury Conservation Fund Guidance Document, once approved by the Commission, would be forwarded to the Select Board for its approval, adoption, and implementation. It is not a Fund that will be used for Commission operating expenses. Commission operating expenditures are handled by Town Treasurer as other town committee's expenditures are handled through town general fund.

SELECT BOARD MEETING:

ATV Signage Update: Stephen reported on meeting with Select Board. Three sign locations were identified, on the bridge crossings over the Wild Branch, at the Hatch Brook Road, and Collinsville Road at town line with Eden. The history of the signage over the last two years was reported. The Select Board felt sign language was lengthy; therefore, signs were too expensive. Stephen will work with Select Board to simplify language. Discussion centered on importance of including State Statutes on the sign. Students at Green Mountain Technical school may be able to do the signs as a graphic's project.

Road Crew Invasives Policy: When landowners receive fill from ditching projects, they should be apprised of potential invasives if present. When ditching takes place, area should be inspected for presence of invasives by member(s) of Conservation Commission, if possible, for presence of invasives. Road Crew, also, has detailed Notebook outlining identification and best practices to minimize and eliminate spreading invasives. Notebook created for Road Crew by the Commission several years ago. Road Crew has a long list of landowners who want fill from ditching projects.

Invasives Disposal Site: Questions needing to be answered: If site is created, is it public or private and for road crew only? How big and deep does area need to be? What have other towns done to create invasive disposal sites? Commission charge is to research as to size and depth of area needed. (No action taken). Creating a disposal site at gravel pit has become a potential; owners would have to be remunerated additionally.

CHIMEY SWIFT PROJECT PROPOSAL: Heidi reported Chimney Swifts, once prevalent, are under stress as nesting areas are fewer or have disappeared. Capped chimneys and chimney stacks in new construction can't be used by the bird for nesting as old chimneys were once able to be used. The project could include educational outreach, public awareness, building chimney towers. Chimney Swifts population is in deep decline. Dead trees and nesting towers are ways to provide

habitat. Cost of towers can be from few hundred dollars to a thousand. WonderArts Greenspace was discussed as a potential site and its willingness to donate \$150. Heidi explained towers look similar to bee boxes stacked. The Chimney Swift uses its saliva and mud to create a nest. Other possibilities would be looking to Boy Scouts as an Eagle Scout project. Raising awareness of public as to plight of Chimney Swifts is essential. Holding a public, educational meeting as was done on other topics to be considered.

OTHER BUSINESS: Farley reported Sterling students studied soil organisms on the site where knotweed chemical eradication project was completed and would report to Commission.

Emerald Ash Boer's has been found in Derby. County Forester Jared Nunnery is available to talk about the Emerald Ash Boer and impact on Vermont forests. Potential public meeting? Consensus was it is an important topic.

The Conservation Commission meets every 4th Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall. The next meeting is scheduled for August 23, 2019.

Submitted by June Pichel Cook
Secretary