

**Minutes of the
Weathersfield Conservation Commission
Thursday, September 22, 2022
Weathersfield Center Meeting House**

Present: Howard Beach, Cheryl Cox, Heather Shand, Ryan Gumbart, Jeff Pelton, Roy Burton, Tyler Harwell

Guest: Rika Henderson

Approval of minutes, August 25, 2022 meeting

There was one correction to the minutes of August 25. In the *Update from the Land Use Department*, there is a not a natural resources area in the energy section. This note can be removed. Jeff moved the minutes be approved. Cheryl seconded, all voted in favor.

Town Forest

a. Cabin Removal - successful day on Saturday for the cabin removal. Two gators were used with about 6 trips. There is a small amount of the cabin remaining, so one more day will be needed. A coordinated walk with the ATA on the next removal day was suggested. At the same time it may be possible to connect with the ATA about the possible trail crossing.

b. Kiosk - Ryan is waiting to hear from Matt Keniston. Ryan will reach out to Bibens Hardware after he talks with Matt to source the lumber.

c. Trails - next step is to journey out with the ATA to discuss status on a few areas. Jeff noted that he would like to see a focus on a hiking trail. Ryan thinks they may have a quote on all of the proposed trails. Ryan will look to get an update.

Waterway naming project update

The letter to residents went to Ryan with the 20+ page proposal document. Olivia has the letter and she will send everything out on Monday. The whole proposal is at the library and Mark will set up a display of the water naming project, information on the Conservation Commission, and copies of the Northern Woodlands magazines. Mark will note contact information if there are questions. We are expecting around \$800 for the mailing. The comments deadline is October 15. Comments will be reviewed at the October meeting.

Fall/Winter event

Roy has reached out to a number of people for a wildlife talk, but no one is currently available. Roy suggested reaching out to Susan Hindinger from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies. Ryan has an inquiry out to her.

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ARPA fund proposal

Ellen researched needed materials and cost for 10 interpretive signs for the Town Forest. She presented the following in an email:

The first sign will explain what a town forest is. Other signs will be developed to highlight important aspects of the Town Forest to be described in the Forest Management Plan.

Using cost estimates from local contractors, the USDA Forest Service, and Doolittle's Print Serve in Claremont, we are requesting funds to install 10 interpretive signs throughout the town forest to educate and inform visitors. These funds will be used as follows:

\$637.60 [Aluminum faced PCV vinyl signs (square edged) by Doolittle's]

\$280.00 [4 hours of graphic design work by Doolittle's]

\$5,000 [wood "Hopewell" style base - easy to install and relatively inexpensive]

\$5,917.60 = Total requested

The conservation commission will supply text and images for the signage. An example of this type of signage -- which should last for approximately 10 years outdoors -- can be found on the Perkinsville Green.

Ryan suggested we use a professional photographer for some images on the signs. Heather agreed to ask Nancy Nutile-McMenemy for a cost estimate for 10 signs of natural images.

Open question: can Ellen or someone else put Ellen's materials and quotes into a document so it can be presented to the select board?

Jeff suggested some type of brook crossing might be an additional ARPA fund project. He will reach out to the ATA on brook crossing recommendations.

Budget

We were approved for \$1100 this year. A good portion of this will go to the water naming project.

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions - Annual Conference

Cost: Early Bird (Until October 1st!) – \$30 for AVCC members and \$40 for non-members Regular Registration (10/1 until 10/15) – \$35 for AVCC members and \$45 for non-members

Ryan is interested in attending. Heather is a maybe, but likely not. Jeff suggested we let the AVCC know we will update our membership and perhaps we can get the early bird discount for members.

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Tyler made a motion to request funding be drawn from the current budget year to cover our annual dues for the Vermont Association of Conservation Commissions. Howard seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Tyler made a motion to fund anyone to attend the annual conference. Seconded by Heather. All voted in favor.

Grants

Possible Grant Opportunities and Possible Projects:

- Communities Caring for Canopy Grant Opportunity
- Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer

Ryan suggested connecting with Ray Stapleton, town Highway Manager and Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee. We can consider possible projects in public areas, such as tree removal or planting in Hoisington Field or on one of the town greens. There are a few ash trees that should come down on the Perkinsville Green, however there are other ash trees on a few main roads that should be prioritized.

Tyler suggests reaching out to the Elm Research Institute in Harrisville, New Hampshire to consider planting elms in public areas. They offer support to restoring elm trees.

Rika offered that she would be willing to have her lane be part of a trial if there is that opportunity.

Reminder to think about the Spring AVCC grant options.

Ryan to check on the renewal of the Northern Woodlands subscription.

Jason Rasmussen wrote to Ryan on September 7 the following message (quoted in part and cc'd to Brandon Gulnick):

There has been a lot of discussion in town recently about zoning in the rural parts of town (i.e. C10). Perhaps a study involving the PC, CC and others looking at forest fragmentation, wildlife habitat, recreation, open space planning, or something similar might make sense. It could be beneficial to look at existing zoning constraints, rethink the newer forest block and habitat connector information, and establish or modify policies for maintaining rural character while also allowing for working at home and other rural enterprises. Other things are eligible under this program as well, such as housing projects, town plan updates, etc.

Land Use update

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a. Bylaws – PUD Review: the planning commission is currently working on this. If interested, information is on the town website or one can reach out to Ryan in his role of Land Use Administrator and he can send information.

b. Town Plan – Energy Section: Monday will be the first review of the proposed document. Any comments can be provided to Ryan or attendance at the Monday meeting is encouraged.

Other/new business

Tyler suggests this might be a good time to inquire of the Planning Commission and/or the Select Board on the status of any zoning law revisions that might be in the Conservation Commission's purview, e.g., the multi year revision of the zoning map.

Ryan suggests we review the Natural Resources section of the Town Plan.

Tyler reminds us that the Thompson study was unable to cover the Black River corridor.

Upcoming events

None

Meeting adjourned 8:35pm

Notes taken by Heather Shand, submitted by Ellen Clattenburg

Next meeting:

October 27, 2022 7:00 PM

Center Meeting House, Weathersfield, Vermont

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