

WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

ATTENDING: Heather Shand, Jeff Pelton, Roy Burton, Cheryl Cox, Howard Beach, Tyler Harwell, Ellen Clattenburg, Harry Temple, and Tina Wood
Guest: Ray Stapleton, Highway Dept. Head and Tree Warden

Meeting called to order: 7:05

Minutes from August 22, were accepted as read in a motion made by Roy and seconded by Jeff.

COYOTE TALK: Roy has arranged to have Kim Royar, leader of the Furbearer Project and David Persons, the Wildlife Ecologist, give a talk on 'Coyotes' on Tuesday, Oct. 22 at 7:00 at the Weathersfield Center Meeting House. Ellen and Heather will do the publicity, Jeff will set up a table with Con. Com. publication, and we will all bring some sort of refreshments.

EMERALD ASH BORER: It is important for the town to be proactive because 90% of Ash trees get infected by the ash tree borer and it is better to cut live trees than it is dead trees. Roy reported on what other towns are doing to combat the EAB. In Orange County, Green Mt. Power is cutting off the tops of the ash trees in the town-right of-way. Roys says it won't stop growth. In Northfield, the town has hired a logger to cut down infected trees.

Ray said that the tree warden has the ultimate authority to remove trees in the town's ROW. The Select Board will have to make a policy. The town's budget will not permit cutting every ash tree in town. Ray's suggestion was to concentrate on one road at a time in the worse hit area and the Con. Com.'s ash tree survey will be a big help in determining where that should be.

There was then a discussion about the wood that will be cut and who gets it: the landowner, the town, or should it be sold. Again the Select Board will need to come up with a policy. Ray said it is very expensive for the town and since cutting trees is not in this year's budget, nothing will be done this year. The Con. Com. could help with marking the trees. There will have to be a big educational outreach to the public and public meetings with land-owners. Perhaps there could be a tree report in the Town Report and also a short explanation at Town Meeting.

TOWN FOREST: Jeff reported that on Sat., Oct. 19 from 9-12 there will be a work day at the Town Forest for clearing trails and cutting brush with the help of members of STAB (Sport Trails in Ascutney Basin). They will do the chainsaw work while we will haul brush. The Select Board has approved the highway crew to work in the TF making trails and tree removal. when not busy with other things. We asked if we could borrow tools from the Town and Ray said no tools could be loaded due to a Town policy.

Jeff talked about the safety of volunteers and insurance coverage. He passed out 2 forms: 1) a Volunteer Service Statement & Agreement and 2) a Risk Management Guideline for Volunteers. He also said volunteers are not covered by the Town's insurance or Workman's Comp. We will request people to bring their own safety equipment (ear and eye protection) and we will provide a first aid kit.

Ellen and Cheryl will do the publicity for this event. Jeff will write a blurb about it and give it to them.

Jeff would like to see a 'Friends of the Town Forest' group formed and we all agreed it would be a good idea.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

October 19th, 9-12 workday at the Town Forest. Bring tools.

October 19th at the Marsh-Billings National Park in Woodstock there will be a talk on Bats. Check their website for more information.

October 22, "Coyote" talk by Kim Royar and David Persons at Weathersfield Meeting House at 7:00.

October 24, Marie Caduto will come to our next meeting to talk about water quality, Black River issues, dams, and erosion.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Wood