WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

JULY 26, 2018

Meeting came to order at 7:05 PM

Attending: Heather Shand, Howard Beach, Roy Burton, Harry Temple, Tina Wood and guest Sven Fedorow, Land Use Administrator

Minutes from June, 6, 2018 were approved.

LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR: Sven F. is concerned about the deer wintering yards that are extensive and cover 60% of the Town, according to our Deer Wintering Map. The town’s by-laws on deer wintering are the strictest in the state and make it difficult for new property owners to comply with as the building must be 300 feet from a deer wintering area. He suggested that that by revisiting the by-laws of the Town Plan we could integrate other wildlife with the deer restrictions, soften the deer restrictions and tighten restrictions for wild and endangered species. We could also look to protect contiguous land corridors. Sven suggested that he would send us the applicants for building permits and the Con. Com. would check their house site’s proximity to deer yards and wildlife corridors.

Howard B. said the Con. Com. doing the site visit with a potential non-conforming use is put in the unfortunate position of no regulatory power.

Tina W. said the problem with a site visit to a wetland is that we have little expertise and especially are at a disadvantage when accompanied by an engineer who represents the applicant but has a vested interest in defining the wetland.

Sven said the State designates the wetland and has the ultimate authority.

Sven studied the 34 sites Elizabeth Thompson’s *Biological Natural Areas of Weathersfield, VT* (1992) identified as the town’s most fragile areas needing the highest level of protection. He handed out Thompson’s report and pointed out that all 34 sites have wetlands, are already on State maps and therefore already protected. He would like to streamline the process of complying with the Town’s and the State’s regulations for building in these areas. Sven will come back with a formal proposal to vote on.

TREASURER’S REPORT: We have $500 and we will spend some of it on upcoming workshops and prizes for the Photo Contest.

PROGRAMS: Heather has confirmed a talk on *Lyme Disease and Tick Prevention* on Sept. 9th at 7PM at the Proctor Library given by a Doctor from Sojourns. The cost of her talk will be shared by the Library and the Parks and Rec Dept.

Roy has Lined up a talk on’ Bobcats’ given by Kim Royer, the State biologist. It will be on Oct. 25th at 7 PM at the Weathersfield Center Meeting House. There is no charge for the talk but we will accept donations.

We need to get out some publicity on these events and email and posters were suggested.

Jeff, who was unable to attend, sent some thoughts and suggestions:

TOWN FOREST: Ed Morris has heard from the State that the small gap between Charlie Johnson’s east boundary and the Interstate fence is State land. Ed will work with the SE consultants on getting a permit from the State to allow a trail to go around Charlie’s land from the Abbot land and into the Town Forest. Ed said that at a Select Board meeting or two, he will approach them to begin purchasing the Abbott property, and hopefully, by next Spring, access would be settled and we could be laying out a trail up and across the Abbott property. He didn’t mention how the wetland issue would be resolved. Also, the parking entrance will need some gravel to make a better entrance off Thrasher Road.

TOWN-OWNED LAND: Last year Ed mentioned to me (Jeff) that perhaps the Con. Com. could work on locating and describing parcels of Town-owned land. It wasn’t a formal request in writing but just mentioned in conversation. I (Jeff) did a bad job of following up on that, and if the Con. Com. didn’t have other work and wanted a project, perhaps that could be one.

GROUND WATER MAPPING: Howard reported that we got a grant and now have a map of ground water sources working with the head of the State Water Dept. He put ground water information in the Town Plan. He would like to see an overlay of the Zoning Map with the water resource & ground water map.

The Town’s wells and public water resources are well protected in the Town Plan. He is trying to get the Planning Commission to adopt an ordinance to protect private and other water resources. Hopefully, within the next six months it will be adopted.

NEW MEMBERS: Julie Schmitz seriously considered the opportunity to join the WCC but is unable to at this time having just retired from the Planning Com.

Ellen Clattenburg is very interested in joining. She is planning to attend the August meeting.

Heather will also contact Natalie Corbo.

NEW BUSINESS: Heather noticed that the Con. Com. page on the Town’s website needs to be updated.

Sven said the whole website needed updating and it is in the process of being redone.

PHOTO CONTEST: There was discussion about continuing to sponsor the Photo Contest and we all agreed that it was a good thing to do and brought the CC some attention. We agreed it will start in Nov. We also discussed the prize money and some felt that too much of our budget went towards prizes. We will revisit this issue at our next meeting. Our thanks goes to Roy for spearheading it.

Next WCC meeting: August 23, 2018 at 7:00 PM at the Center Meeting House.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Wood