

## **DRAFT**

### **MINUTES**

29 December 2014

CCC

Attendees—Mary Dodge, Marc Lapin, Brian Howlett, Bethany Menkart, Rene Langis, Mike Sheridan

Guests—Marc Cesario, John Burton

Amy Sheldon reviewed the changes she had made to the draft water quality-land use report. We looked at a 3-page handout with our comments and how she responded in the report. This report gives us the opportunity to look more closely at Douglas Pond and S. Bingham Pond. A better understanding of these subwatersheds can provide information about possible management recommendations and flag areas where mitigation could be most effective. Douglas Pond management should keep in mind that the pond is an artifact not a natural pond. It was likely a wetland. One option is to install a sluice dam that could be open for hydraulic flushing during high flow times of year but could be closed in summer and late fall/winter to allow for swimming and ice-skating. Question of whether any water quality testing has been done, other than by the High School students. Amy will send final copy to Marc and Mary and we will distribute and have Sue Johnson make copies available.

Commission read Brett Engstrom's update. CCC needs to work with Brett to set date for the completion of a draft of his report in March and the 2<sup>nd</sup> public forum at end of April. Brian notes that we need an outreach process so as not to "spring" the results of Brett's report on the town residents, but rather present results and direction that CCC and PC are intending to take.

Discussion of CCC work this spring. As the Inventory nears its completion, it is a time to consider how our efforts might be organized in the months and years ahead.

PC is moving ahead on some of their action items from Town Plan and has contacted Mary and Marc to seek our advice on the natural resources goals from Plan.

CCC will do some reading together to look at how other towns use the natural resources data. Also think about discussions with Marty Illick, E.D. of Lewis Creek Association, and/or Jens Hilke, VT Fish and Wildlife Department.

Mary suggests subcommittees/work groups could focus on different tasks to get the work done and move ahead on various tracks simultaneously.

- 5 Year Plan
- Overlay district thinking
- Zoning regulation updates
- Douglas Pond
- Promoting conservation and natural resource education

- Conservation Fund (we were contacted by David Anderson of PC to work on this with him)

Bethany pointed to the need for more information from Amy and Brett before we can set 5-year priorities.

Marc C.: access to land is an issue for young, start-up farms. Amherst and Northfield, MA created conservation funds that helped farmers get access to land. Currently a lot of land farmed by 60-year olds and older. The question will be who will farm those lands in the future and will they be farmed. This is one piece of what a fund could be used for.

Mike asked us to think about the parameters of conservation and what are we working to conserve? Natural areas and farming are both well within how we define ourselves.

Mary proposed a 5-month plan. Rene said that we need this and a 5-year plan.

Brian, CCC both a pro-active and reactive mode. Reactive is advising PC on subdivision applications. Proactive will allow us to work on priorities for conservation.

February meeting – CCC discussion of readings before we go forward and think about overlay districts and town regulations. Marc L will send to CCC ANR Riparian Buffer Guidance, VNRC wildlife conservation and town planning report. Mary will send excerpts from VNRC's Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife.

March meeting – perhaps invite Marty and Jens for that month.

Joint meeting with the Salisbury Conservation Commission is scheduled for Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm at the Cornwall Town Hall. Members volunteered to bring munchies.

Discussion with prospective member Marc Cesario about the Conservation Commission role, capacity, authority, and financing. Brian gave an overview of the legal guidelines under which we operate. Marc C. told us about his background and interests.

John Burton discussed his interest to see what happens at a CCC meeting. Expressed question of what are better ways of using the land and what are barriers against better practices. When was land use being done correctly? A lot of barriers against making changes based on macro-level factors, which are the ones that drive a lot of the problems.

Adjourn 1:05

