

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, October 30, 2019
12:30-2:00 pm, Cornwall Town Hall

Attending Members: Mary Dodge, Katherine Branch, Rene Langis, Bethany Barry, with yummy applesauce cake from Mary, made from local apples, of course!

Recording Secretary: Bethany Barry

Discussion Items:

- Reviewed planning for upcoming “Walk: How Our Lands Reflect Natural and Human History” on Sat. Nov. 2 at Cornwall Orchards B&B, led by Craig Zontag, local naturalist. Lise Anderson, owner, will assist with walk, and we’ll end up at Windfall Orchards afterwards with cider and donuts.
- Swamp Reclassification Project update. Increasingly important with climate change and more frequent flooding. Cornwall Swamp is an essential buffer for both Middlebury and Cornwall. Discussed possible actions. Next Reclassification Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for mid-December.

Future Programs:

- Discussed the Vermont Conservation Design and using Biofinder mapping tool. Developed by VT ANR to assist communities in planning for future land use, they can be used together to help each town identify its important natural resources and those most worthy of protection and preservation. (Find additional information in Summit discussion below.)
- Conserving Your Lands – (Winter) Cornwall has many landowners who deeply value the natural features and beauty of their property, and wonder how can these natural resources be sustained now and continued into the future? Planting native species, for birds and pollinators, wildlife habitat, soil renewal, and water protection. How do we learn about them? Conservation easements, and how they can benefit a landowner financially but also ensure that one’s property will always remain free of development and welcoming to wildlife and native vegetation. Where can landowners go to get more information?
- Summer Migrants –Cornwall Birds. (Spring) Discussion of possible activities: daytime presentation to school and evening meeting for the town, follow-up birdhouse make and take, and guided walk. MS and BH will be contacted to see if they can help with the planning.
- Wildlife Road Crossing Documentation – two grants have been submitted to fund the purchase of trail cameras to help the CC document the town’s high frequency wildlife road crossing areas. Salisbury has done well with this, and offered rentals through their library, as with books. Cornwall hopes to do the same after all the data has been collected.

Outreach:

- Town Hall Bulletin Board – KB has updated it, and it looks great!
- Welcome Buckets for new Cornwall residents - BB and MD to discuss.
- CC page on Cornwall Town website - Review yet to be done.
- Contact with Elementary school –MS indicated that the school might be interested in the Migrant Bird presentation
- CPC connections discussed – MD went to the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Select Board that discussed their next steps in the SB's review of the zoning draft. SB agreed to produce a list of policy concerns that will be presented to the PC in early December.
- DRB Beaver Brook LL Hearing (11-6-2019). Cesario/VLT Easement was approved by the VHCB at their September 24, 2019 meeting.

Conservation Commission Summit, Sept. 28,2019, held at Breadloaf:

Four of us went to different sessions which were informative, inspiring and connective. The keynote speaker was Liz Thompson, Director of Conservation Science at VLT. She spoke about Vermont Conservation Design, which is a practical, scientific vision for sustaining Vermont's ecologically functional landscape into an uncertain future. Some of the sessions were: Return on Investment in Conservation, Town Conservation Fund Panel, Climate Resilience, Town Forests, Programs, Incentives and VCD on Private Land, Forest Blocks and their importance for many species, and Vermont Conservation Design, with Biofinder, which is being used in planning for future as to how natural resources can be protected and preserved. Some of us went on a short hike into the woods at the end to see a rare patch of old growth hemlock, which was wonderful!

New Business:

Commission membership. The CC continues to reach out to possible new members.

January 2020 Newsletter: RL

Next meeting: Mon. Dec. 9 at 6:30 pm – CTH – KB will bring tasty treat!