

**Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 8, 2020
7:00-8:00 pm, Zoom Teleconference**

CC Members Present: Katherine Branch (KB), Mary Dodge (MD), Rene Langis (RL), Mike Sheridan (MS). Absent: Brian Howlett (BH).

Also attending: Don Burns, Churchill Franklin and Bruce Byers

Designate Recording Secretary: Rene Langis

Conservation Fund Town Forum (7:00-7:30 pm)

KB began the Forum by summarizing the research conducted so far and the comments received around 2 questions:

- 1- What's important for you in a conservation fund?
- 2- What funding mechanisms should be considered?

On what's important in a conservation fund, interviewees mentioned purchase of land or easement with the objective of conservation. One participant pointed out that it can be difficult for a landowner to make some of their land accessible to general public. KB indicated that this has also come up during MALT's efforts to run a trail through private lands.

On the mechanics of funding, different funding mechanism were discussed, including adding a small tax to the general fund, a flat amount approved by the town and private donations. One participant commented that it is easier to think about funding approaches when there is an actual project needing the funding.

The forum ended at 7:30.

Old Business:

Conservation Panel. CC members agreed that the October Zoom meeting was a success with 37 participants, that panelists' presentations were very informative and good questions were raised and well answered by the panel. All agreed that the zoom format may be something to keep for future meeting/events even post-Covid, as it provides an easy and convenient way for people to participate.

Action Item: RL will look into adding a banner as a title over the recorded event.

Conservation Fund: KB mentioned that the amount set for the first year of the fund could be increased in following years. MS said it may be better to start with a low number and then catch-up, KB thinks that \$3500 might be a good place to start.

It was agreed that conversation regarding the appropriate funding level should be discussed at the upcoming SB (12/15/2020) and PC (12/16/2020) meetings and future steps be adjusted according to comments received. The goal remains to have an articulated proposal for the 2021 Town Meeting.

Trail Camera Project. MS asked about expanding the number of active cameras to other camera owners, MD will reach out to one potentially interested participant.

Website "Current Projects" page. Kieran Sheridan, student at the MUHS IB program, completed a first draft of "Current Projects" webpages and is ready for for comments.

Action Item: MD, KB and RL will review and reply to Kieran.

New Business:

January Newsletter (late December/early January submission.) KB will prepare the CC submission for the newsletter. In a separate article she will detail the Conservation Fund Study Group's research and recommendations.

CC Membership. RL announced that he is moving from Cornwall and, consequently, will resign from CC effective January 1. The group thanked Rene for the many ways he has contributed to the CC during his years as a member of the CC. Suggestions were made for future CC members, including a proposition to create "student CC member" from MUHS IB program, which would be credited as an active participation in a community program. In addition, Don Burns was formally invited to join the CC during the meeting.

Date for next meeting. January 4th (12:30-1:30)

Newsletter: January '20 (December); April '21 (March); July '21 (June) October '21 (September);