

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 17, 2021
12:30-2:00 pm, Zoom Teleconference

CC Members Present: Katherine Branch , Don Burns, Sharon DeHaven, Mary Dodge

Recording Secretary: Sharon DeHaven

Old Business:

1. Conservation Fund Procedures & Criteria. Katherine indicated that the work of the policies and procedures subcommittee was nearing completion. The next step will be sharing the document with the whole Conservation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Select Board for comment and approval.
2. Programming Ideas for '21-'22. Mary shared excerpts from the 2013 Town Plan relevant to the work of the CC as well as a survey of activities residents desired of the Commission. Advocating for land conservation was a priority.

Several ideas about how the CC might promote the conservation of lands were discussed: build upon the Fall '20 panel, explore the creation of a CC Friends support group, connect with MALT and other area Land Trusts. There was a consensus that personal contact through CC outreach activities verses brochures and newsletter pieces would be most effective when it can happen.

Mary and Don will work on a draft of a Welcome Letter to new Cornwall residents describing the CC's conservation efforts. Included would be the CC's "Celebrating our Natural Resources" brochure and an invitation to call if they were interested in talking with a CC representative. Katherine will review the brochure and revise as needed.

VT Coverts has a "Welcome Bag" program, in which Covert cooperators meet individually with new residents in their town who have expressed an interest in receiving a packet of natural resources information. Usually, landowners contacted by Coverts have 20 acres or more of land. Mary is a Coverts cooperator and offered to look into the program as well as finding more about VT Coverts' "Passing Lands" workshop.

Katherine offered to review the email from MALT's Jamie Brookside proposing joint work between Middlebury, Weybridge and Cornwall on strategizing conservation approaches.

Katherine shared plans for the CC's fall outdoor presentation, "Get Pollinated," led by Andrew Munkres. She is also planning to invite the BeeTheChange student mentioned by Mike to participate. Saturday

October dates are being considered. Sharon is offering her yard as the "venue" setting. Katherine requested help with the event activities.

Mary introduced the idea of a CC Backyard Blog that could help residents locate natural resource information. Examples: UVM's online courses, resident specialists willing to consult on topics like home composting, native plantings, attracting and identifying backyard birds, invasives management. Katherine indicated the Jericho CC had such a blog. Mary will work on the idea and report back at the next meeting.

3. Knotweed Removal. VT Fish & Wildlife has agreed to spray the West Street/Rte. 125 corner patch in early June and then again in late-summer. Currently, the area is roped off to prevent mowing before the June spraying.
4. Planning Commission. Don reported that the PC has had two training sessions on the workings of Planning Commissions. There has been a switch in terminology describing forest blocks: "forest integrity" is replacing "forest fragmentation."
5. Trail Camera Project. A final report on the AVCC Trail Camera grant is due late May.

New Business:

1. Conversation with Zoning Administrator. Mary will initiate a conversation with Gary Barnet about town natural resources regulations. What do they cover? If a resident is concerned about a possible violation, how is this best addressed?
2. July Newsletter. Katherine offered to write the newsletter.

Date for next meeting: Tentative date: Monday, June 21, 2021 (12:30-2:00 pm)

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