

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes: Thurs May 18 2017 12:30 PM

Present Mary Dodge (Chair,) Mike Sheriden, Rene Langlis, Bethany Barry, Brian Howlett

Minutes transcribed by Brian Howlett

New Business:

The Commission discussed its' goals and opportunities for the upcoming year, and the members ability to contribute to these goals. All members were pleased with the diverse representation on the commission. We concluded that the commission has four basic frameworks for future projects:

- 1) The recently developed Cornwall recreational trails initiative involving other townspeople
- 2) Ongoing outreach concerning environmental and conservation education and promotion
- 3) Anything we can do for wildlife, including habitat preservation and connectivity development, as well as using wildlife objectives for educational programs
- 4) Becoming part of the process, and inserting conservation objectives into the upcoming zoning bylaw revision wherever practical

The commission also discussed changes which could improve member participation, including limiting the meeting time, and/or limiting the amount of time to be spent on each action item. It was proposed that we become more patient in developing consensus, and be willing to table action items to the next meeting if we could not resolve them in the time available.

Mary updated the Commission on the activities of the subcommittee for a recreational area on the Town of Cornwall-owned Douglas Pond property. They have applied for a Technical Assistance Planning Grant for this project, and have met with the Planning Commission, the Selectboard (three times), and the adjoining landowners, and appear to have the cautious permission of enough of these to move forward with the grant application (finally!).

Old Business:

Mary and Bethany provided details of the well-received presentation by Susan Morse last month on Bobcats in the Champlain Valley. Around 90 people were present, though it was not known how many were Cornwall residents. Despite concern in advance of the presentation, it was fully funded with \$ 100 from the Cornwall School, \$112 from donations and \$175 from the trust for public funds. Sue Morse also received a grant which reduced her speaking fee. The public feedback was very positive, and there was a proposal to have her return in the fall to do an additional presentation, possibly on coyotes, to be funded in a similar manner. Bethany and Mary expressed regret and concern over the number of commission members who were unable to attend the presentation.

There were two sessions at ILsley Library last month for training to use the State Bio-finder website, attended by Mary and Rene. Rene noted shortcomings with the program for our applications but felt that it was the best tool available.

Mary announced that the Plant Swap held during Green Up Day generated \$52 .

After a few cancellations, Jens Hilke finally met with the planning commission to discuss the results of the townwide Community Values Mapping project. At their request, he has produced an additional map, dividing the important location by the groups which proposed them. Mary has a copy of this map, and has added it to the others. There is no additional information- it was just presented in a different way.

Marc L has developed a standardized template for the Conservation Commission to use in evaluating Development Review Board subdivision proposals. Mary gave us a copy of this document. Rene and Mary will be working with Marc L to review each application and provide timely feedback to the DRB in anticipation of the hearing.

The Planning Commission is beginning to work on the new zoning bylaws. In June, they are planning a public meeting to share the process for updating the bylaws and solicit resident involvement. They are inviting the CC and other town groups to participate fully in this process.

Mary presented a follow-up to our February meeting with Stan Gryzb, a Cornwall representative to the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Stan asked the ACRPC what needed to be done to incorporate the results of our Natural Resources Inventory into the natural resources section of the regional plan and discovered that Brett needed to reformat the inventory into specific data points that would allow it to be entered into the State database. Brett agreed that this is something that needs to be completed, that he is capable of this and has agreed to do so, but we don't know if it has happened yet.

Bethany presented an overview of a previous meeting at her home of a group of citizens interested in the recreational trails initiative. At this formative meeting, there was a wide ranging discussion of the meaning, purpose and ambiance of trails. Four areas for trails were discussed including Douglas Pond, the ledges, Cornwall Swamp, and several abandoned roads.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the progress reports for the town newsletter were delegated as follows. July-Bethany, October-Rene, January-Brian

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for the second week in June, date yet-to-be-determined, with many previous commitments later in the month.