

Cornwall Conservation Commission minutes
Thurs. August 23, 2018
7 pm, Cornwall Town Hall

Present: Rene Langis (RL), Mary Dodge (MD), Bethany Barry (BB), Marc Cesario (MC), Mike Sheridan (MS, recording secretary)

1) Announcements

- a. CC/DRB review procedure. The process for the CC's review of projects in advising the DRB on development applications was modified in consultation with DRB Chair Barbara Greenwood. The reporting form remains the same. Both will be reviewed by the DRB. The CC should get some sort of documentation of DRB approval of our process (e.g., a copy of their minutes for our own records).
 - b. Zoning bylaws. Revisions to be discussed at a public meeting, to review the Significant Features Overlay (SFO). CC to discuss further at our next meeting to identify and articulate our goals for the SFO.
 - c. Norinsberg dam. This dam, located on Beaver Brook south of Clark Road and east of South Bingham, is badly eroded and may be in danger of breaching. MD contacted the Selectboard, and John Roberts checked and found that a 2017 state report confirmed that it was in poor condition even then. But because there are no houses directly in its floodplain, the state considers its hazard level to be low. The dam is owned by a lawyer named Jon Norinsberg who lives in NY. We discussed whether there's a conservation interest in maintaining the dam (preserving the hydrological status quo) or letting it break (letting Beaver Brook flow free!). We decided that, while there are important natural features connected with the dam, there is no clear conservation objective for the CC to pursue. But, we could offer to assist Norinsberg as best we can. MJS to write a short letter to Norinsberg saying that the CC is a resource for conservation information about Beaver Brook.
- 2) Discussion with Monica Pryzperhart – Wildlife and road crossings. Pryzperhart gave a presentation on connectivity habitat in Cornwall. She pointed out areas on the Bylaws draft SFO map that the state has designated as important wildlife habitat blocks, these are secondary forests that were not ecologically significant enough for inclusion in the Cornwall Inventory. We need a long-term strategy for doing some sorts of conservation to preserve connectivity between these areas and the ecologically significant sites identified in the Inventory. Pryzperhart recommends that we gather data on wildlife movement between these areas and develop some options. Possible conservation strategies include larger culverts, advising landowners, promoting the VT State Current Use program, leaving vegetation along the roadside by mowing the crossing areas less frequently, putting up signs. There are different processes for putting up wildlife signs for town vs. state roads (the latter go through the Regional Planning Commission). Having documentation on wildlife movement patterns would help the CC in advising the DRB on development applications. Pryzperhart to supply some resources on best practices for wildlife crossing conservation.
- 3) Outreach activities

- a. Steve Trombulak to do a public lecture on November 14 on wildlife habitat connectivity. CC to discuss our goals for this in our Sept meeting and advise Trombulak.
- b. Guided walks. Discussed a possible Beaver Brook walk, decided to discuss later for a spring event.
- c. Jim Andrews' amphibians presentation will be scheduled for late winter and possibly a guided walk. Details to be finalized at September meeting.
- d. Brochure. BB and RL working on a Cornwall Conservation brochure (to be given to new people moving to town as part of a welcome kit).
- e. Backyard habitat UVM online course 9/14-11/3. CC will post this opportunity to Front Porch Forum, RL did it last year so will write up a paragraph on his experience for the post.

Next meeting – Sept. 27, 7 pm. MS to bring brownies.

Newsletter writing duties for 2018-19:

October (due Sept): BB

January (due December): RL

April (due March): MS

July (due June): MC