

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 27, 2022 (7:00-8:15 pm)
Town Hall, In person and via Zoom

CCC Members present: Katherine Branch, Don Burns, Andrea Landsberg, Kristina Sargent, and Michael Sheridan (chairing this meeting)

Recording Secretary: Katherine Branch

Correspondence Review: The CCC reviewed the Oct. 7, 2002 memo from FEMA Risk Analysis Branch Chief (Region 1) Kerry Bogdan. This memo was sent to the chairs of the various Cornwall commissions and the Select Board, and notified the town that USGS and FEMA had selected the New Haven River and Otter Creek in the Otter Creek Watershed for engineering and mapping of these reaches, which will then form the basis for the proposed Special Flood Hazard Areas to be presented on the Flood Insurance Rate Map. Cornwall has until November 7th to submit comments and suggestions about the modeling proposed by FEMA. If the SB wants a Conservation Commission input, Don will communicate to the SB that the CCC would be willing to do so.

Old Business:

1. AVCC Annual Summit (October 15, 2022) report. Katherine and Andrea reported on the Summit and its important message that conservation work is essential for future climate resilience, and nature-based climate solutions are increasingly useful. Andrea reviewed the session she attended on flood and hazard mitigation—some federal funding is available. Assistance to conservation commissions is potentially available via UVM's new Ecological Planning Laboratory (EPL), and Andrea noted that the EPL is seeking input via a survey:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkuI_Moy9JIMzuDp33CATuh7mqnH0y8y5M15exa_WxFgnEpQ/viewform.
2. Get Wild! Blog report/update. Bethany Barry is willing to do the Pollinator section, but needs some training before posting for the first time.
3. Conservation landowner interviews update. Katherine reported that she has completed one additional interview. The respondent asked that their specific responses be “off the record.” However, the interview was very useful in that the respondent suggested a short and snappy FAQ with 3 main reasons to conserve: retain ownership of your land; preserve the working landscape; and financial benefits. There is already a link on the main CCC web site to a multi-page Land Conservation FAQ that was posted about a year ago. Two other landowners were contacted for a second time, but no responses were received. No additional follow-up with these two landowners is planned. Mary is still planning on contacting one additional landowner for an interview.

New Business:

1. Possible presentation/program by Alicia Daniel, who leads the Vermont Master Naturalist program. Potentially tied into a book discussion of the book *Our Better Nature*, which was edited by Eric Hagen and Curt Lindberg (Waitsfield CC chair), and which has essays by and about Vermonters involved in conservation and natural resources. Andrea

will contact Alicia to find out what she has done with other conservation commissions, and Andrea will report back to the CCC.

2. Web site idea – upload town newsletter CCC columns. There was agreement that this should be done but no-one was assigned the task of follow-up. The newsletter columns could also be posted on the blog—Kristina will follow up (?). The table of past CCC activities that Andrea prepared should also be posted on the web site.

3. CC mini-summit – meeting jointly with Weybridge/Salisbury Conservation Commissions. At the AVCC Summit, Gioa Kuss (Weybridge CC) and Katherine talked about a possible joint meeting of the three conservation commissions, recognizing that natural resources cross town boundaries. Potential goals of a joint meeting: brainstorm together, share ideas, jointly plan and promote programming, cooperate together on larger projects requiring more people and/or resources. Further discussion at our next meeting.

4. Brainstormed other 2023 programming. Discussed having an overarching theme, as we did last year with “Backyard Conservation”. Consider the entire year, and schedule regularly throughout the year, instead of bunching up programs in one or two seasons. For example, a talk or book discussion would be a winter event.

Possible 2023 programs (not in priority order):

- Better Nature book talk; program by Alicia Daniel
- Winter Swamp walk. Kristina had many people email to say they couldn’t attend the September walk and wanted another chance.
- Environmental education program. With presenter Alexis Mychajiw, Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at the College, who studies the paleontologist of extinct mammals North America. In March?
- Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Park for a second visit, with another topic. Can we get more people signed up? Another possibility is a field to the Bread Loaf campus, which was conserved in 2015
- Winter tracking
- Greg Pask: firefly evening in early June (Cornwall schoolkids)
- Emerald Ash Borer, landowner education event. First detector Andrea plus someone from the State. EAB Day.
- Green Up Day. Include a community event, like the plant swap in the past.
- Autumn pollinator seed sowing event.
- We discussed developing some criteria for determining programming. Maybe prioritize things we haven’t already done?. Also include annual activities that we would always do (Green Up Day for example); high interest by townspeople.

At next meeting, we will decide which programs to pursue.

5. Discussion of CC leadership and recruitment. The discussion touched on the following: Have we exhausted the possibilities for a chair within the CCC? Is there another model for leading the Commission? Can we rotate leading the meetings? Can we redistribute responsibilities? Have we done as much as we can in terms of soliciting new members?

Chairs usually shape the work of a Commission. The nature of the CCC might be different in the future. Possibly write a “job description”/list of responsibilities.

Andrea will draft a Front Porch Forum post to recruit new members for review by the entire CCC.

6. Choose next meeting date. Monday November 21st. Andrea will chair the meeting. Agenda should be sent to Sue for posting one week prior to the meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 21st, 7:00 pm.

Agenda/discussion items for next meeting: Joint meeting with Weybridge and Salisbury CCs; continuation of discussion of CCC leadership, including a list of responsibilities of a chair; decide on public programs for the upcoming year, including whether to have an overarching theme.

Action items prior to next meeting:

Katherine: draft preliminary criteria for deciding on next year's programs

Don: Communicate to SB that CCC is willing to review the FEMA memo if SB has interest in that; draft a "job description"/list of duties that a Chair fulfills

Andrea: contact Alicia Daniel; prepare agenda for November CCC meeting; draft FPF post to recruit new members (to be reviewed by entire CCC)

Kristina: investigate whether newsletter columns can be easily posted on blog

Newsletter: January '23 (December), April '23 (March-Kristina). July '22 (June).

[Prior newsletters Fall 2022 Kristina; Summer 2022 Katherine; Spring 2022 Andrea; Winter 2021/22 Katherine; Fall 2021 Mike? ; Spring 2021 Mary?; Summer 2021 Katherine]