

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 11, 2023
7:00-8:30 pm

CCC Members Present: Katherine Branch, Don Burns, Mary Dodge, Andrea Landsberg and Kristina Sargent.

Meeting Chair: Katherine Branch
Recording Secretary: Don Burns

March Minutes: Approved.

Old Business:

1. Trail Camera Data Review

- a. Mary distributed notes regarding Cornwall Habitat Blocks and Connectors Inventory and the potential use of data from the 3 year Cornwall Trail Camera Project.
- b. Mary shared a map that showed the priority connectivity block designations in the Town Plan Update, highlighting their inadequacy in documenting existing habitat linkages that currently support wildlife and other biodiversity.
- c. Tabled discussion regarding potential formation of a subcommittee to review trail camera data and determine next steps as related to habitat mapping until next meeting so Mike Sheridan can participate.

2. VT Fish. & Wildlife Meeting (April 4) Review

- a. Kristina, Katherine & Andrea from the CCC as well as Amy, Tim & John from VT F&W attended.
- b. Meeting objective was for VT F&W to describe plan to establish and maintain nesting bird habitat in the overgrown ~50 acre field north of Swamp Road and west of Cornwall Swamp as well as for the CCC to present its concerns with the plan (herbicide use, drainage into Cornwall Swamp & adjacent organic maple farm property).
- c. CCC consensus is that VT F&W heard the concerns but may not change its plan.

3. Potential ARPA Funds Projects

- a. Current ideas
 - i. Enhancing Cornwall Habitat Inventory as proposed in the draft Town plan update. (Mary)
 - ii. Creation of a Town Forest. (Kristina & Andrea)
 - iii. Conservation oriented after school programs for Cornwall School. (Mike, Don & Mary)
- b. Concepts to be researched and further developed by respective members above in parentheses.

- c. Findings to be presented at May CCC meeting.
- 4. **Carbon Sequestration Program Proposal**
 - a. Possible forest walk and talk led by Marc Lapin and/or Stever Bartlett.
 - b. CCC consensus is that it is a good idea and worth doing.
 - c. Mary to discuss with Marc Lapin and Katherine volunteered to talk with Stever Bartlett.
 - d. Will review potential scheduling at May CCC meeting.

New Business:

- 1. **Zoom Option for CCC Meetings**
 - a. Agreed to routinely include Zoom option for future CCC meetings.
- 2. **Community Forest and Open Space Program**
 - a. Town Forest project will not work under the Forest Legacy Program because Cornwall is not located in a State designated focus area.
 - b. The USFS Community Forest and Open Space Program may offer an opportunity for conserving land for a town forest.
 - c. Kristina and Andrea to research further as a potential ARPA funded project.
- 3. **Chair for May CCC Meeting**
 - a. Kristina volunteered to chair the meeting.
 - b. Katherine will take minutes.

Updates & Announcements:

- 1. **CSB, CPC & DRB Reports**
 - a. CSB:
 - i. Tanya Byker is new CSB Chair. Ben Marks will be Vice-Chair.
 - ii. CSB has received and is in process of reviewing draft Town Plan update.
 - b. CPC:
 - i. CPC approved and submitted draft Town Plan update to CSB for review.
 - ii. CPC to meet with other Town organizations over the next year as outreach and to encourage collaboration.
 - iii. CPC will be focusing on action items from the Plan Implementation section of the draft Town Plan. Opportunity for CCC to weigh in regarding specific projects and priorities.
 - c. DRB:
 - i. Nothing to report.
- 2. **Green-Up Day – Saturday, May 6**
 - a. Swamp Road parking lot cleanup (Katherine): 10:00AM.
 - b. Emerald Ash Borer Info Table (Andrea) at Town Hall Drop-Off

3. **Amphibian Crossing Update**
 - a. Approximately 16-17 people participated over five evenings successfully assisting in the crossing of about 200 salamanders.
4. **Ledges Property Update**
 - a. At this time, realtor not interested in showing property if not a potential buyer.
 - b. Will consider other ways to visit the property.
5. **Bingham/Cesario Property for Sale**
 - a. Farm and forest property conserved for future farming last year by VLT.
 - b. At this time, sale must go to farmer.
 - c. Potential concept for town forest? Likely will require modifying VLT agreement.
6. **Wildlife Protection Act:** House Bills H.323 and H.191.
 - a. Bills did not make it through crossover.
7. **Alicia Daniel Talk:** re: Our Better Nature book.
 - a. Andrea to discuss scheduling with Alicia.
 - b. Will suggest September, weekend, mid-morning.
8. **Pitch Pine Trail Get-Together with Salisbury & Weybridge CCs**
 - a. Sunday, April 30, 12:30-2:30PM. Bring lunch.
 - b. Rain Date: May 7.

Date for Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 @ 7:00-8:30PM. Town Hall
Chair: Kristina, Minutes: Katherine

Newsletter: July '23 (June), October '23 (September), January '24 (December), April '24 (March),