

Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 11, 2023 (7:00-8:30 pm)
Cornwall Town Hall

CCC Members present: Michael Sheridan, Katherine Branch, Don Burns, Mary Dodge, and Andrea Landsberg

Meeting Chair: Don Burns

Recording Secretary: Katherine Branch

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of the minutes of June 13, 2023 meeting was postponed until next meeting, after Mary and Mike discuss the different drafts of the minutes.

Old Business

1. Cornwall Habitat Blocks and Connectors Inventory. Follow up on Monica Przyperhart interview. The proposed plan for the Inventory of Cornwall Habitat Connectivity Blocks was reviewed. Funding likely would come from multiple sources, as was the case with the Natural Resources Inventory. Grant writing would be a component of the project that would require help from CCC members. The discussion will continue at the next meeting, with each member coming prepared with specific ideas to define the overarching purpose of the project. It is also recommended that each commission member listen to the recording of Monica Przyperhart's interview prior to the August meeting.
2. County-wide meeting of conservation commissions. The meeting will take place on Saturday, November 4th from about 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Bristol's Holley Hall. "Save-the-date" emails will be sent out in the next several weeks to county conservation commissions, and a small group planning meeting is scheduled for August 15th.
3. Project concepts for ARPA funding.
 - a. a. Mike has contacted teachers at the school, but he did not receive a meaningful response. This idea will be tabled for now.
 - b. Andrea has contacted the CORA group with a brief summary of a possible demonstration native plant garden, with informative signage possible.
 - c. Mike briefly presented the idea of expending about \$250 in materials costs to modify the bat "condominium" off Swamp Road by adding smaller bat houses on 4 of the posts and predator guards off of the horizontal surfaces. Because of the low cost of this project, it might also be a candidate for a request to the Public Funds of Cornwall if it is not approved for ARPA funds. Mike will write up a description of the project to submit to the Select Board.
4. Review and discussion of blog options. There is not a way to archive photos. However, if we move to another platform, we should not lose what has already been created. There are about 70 people subscribed to the blog now, and as a comparison, there are now 31 followers on Instagram. Andrea will contact Natalia to ask for her feedback on whether to pay for more storage on the blog or to transition to just Instagram and Facebook. Andrea will also contact John Roberts, who is the Select Board member overseeing a possible new platform for the Town website, to see whether the blog could be incorporated into the new web page proposal for the Town.

5. Community Forest discussion. The federal Community Forest Program funding has requirements of at least 5 acres and at least 75% forested. The federal program priorities include public access (a requirement for the program); community values, input and involvement; and community benefit beyond acres protected. It also requires a 50% non-federal match. We decided that, given the possible locations in Cornwall, the requirement for public access would not be achievable, so we won't pursue this further.
6. We still need to assign newsletter column for April '24.

New Business

1. Community Caring for Canopy and Vermont Recreational Trails Program funding thoughts. Next deadline December 31, 2023. Grants between \$1,000 and \$5,000. From the web site: "These grants allow for multiple program components (e.g., tree planting, tree maintenance, tree inventory, plan development, emerald ash borer or other pest preparedness, public outreach, staff training, and program development) to be merged into one grant application". We won't take action on this at this time.

Updates, Reports and Announcements

1. Reports from SB, DRB and CPC (Don, Katherine, Mary). Planning Commission's July 19th meeting will be preceded by a public hearing, with Addison County Regional Planning Commission, so they can review the planning process that was followed and assess the Plan for certain features. The July DRB meeting was cancelled. The SB has not met since the prior CCC meeting.
2. Ledges letter property update. No further contact from the landowner.
3. Review of July 1 Firefly Event with Greg Pask. Air quality was very poor that day due to Canada wildfires, so attendance was lower than what it might have been. Scheduling on the Saturday of July 4th weeken may also have impacted attendance.
4. Alicia Daniel program. Reading the Landscape walk. Sunday, September 17th, 1:00-3:00 pm. 517 Snake Mountain Road, Cornwall. Andrea will begin to advertise this with a "poster" for Sue to email out and also on Front Porch Forum and the Addison Independent event calendar.
5. Proposal for possible carbon sequestration program. This will be postponed to 2023-2024 year.
6. Will replace a conservation-themed joint program with MALT with the county-wide conservation commissions meeting on Nov 4. MALT has been notified.
7. Status of Herbicide Treatment of Swamp adjacent land. The field was treated in early June in the middle of the day and soy has been planted. The buffers between the field and the maple trees, as well as along the road, is full of poisonous parsnip.
8. The Otter Creek Watershed (OCW) Insect Control District appears to have significantly altered and expanded their adulticide pesticide spraying, to include an area that is directly adjacent to the bat condo habitat in Cornwall. Barb Karle of the Salisbury Conservation Commission sent a letter to Steve

Dwinell (Director, Public Health & Agricultural Resource Management Division, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets), who oversees complaints about the mosquito control district operations. The letter raises various issues, including spraying near the bat colonies in Cornwall. Mike will follow up with a contact he has who specializes in small mammal conservation. Depending on what Mike learns, the CCC might follow up with a letter stating its concerns.

9. CCC Website Update. Katherine checked the CCC web site to see if it had been updated by Emily May, per Katherine's email of May 5th. It did not appear to be updated, so Katherine sent Emily a reminder email on July 11th; Katherine will send Emily a reminder in about 10 days.

August 8th meeting: Mary Dodge, chair; Don Burns, recording secretary.

Newsletter: July '23 (June-Katherine), October '23 (September – Mike), January '24 (December-Andrea), April '24 (March-????)