

**Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday December 12, 2023 (7:00-8:00 pm)**  
**Cornwall Town Hall**

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

Meeting Chair: Michael Sheridan

Recording Secretary: Andrea Landsberg

Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2023

#### Old Business

1. Inventory of Cornwall Habitat Connectivity Blocks update (Mary)

A number of activities have taken place. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, Mary, Don, and Andrea drove Cornwall roads with Inventory consultant Sophie Mazowita so she could compare actual ground conditions to existing maps regarding ground cover, structures, etc. as well as elevations. At the Dec 7<sup>th</sup> public meeting, she and Monica Pryzperhart did great presentations about the rationale for the project and what will be happening in early 2024. There were 30+ people at the meeting and they seemed enthusiastic to participate with many staying after to talk and sign up to provide information. Sophie has also been speaking to residents who are sharing their knowledge regarding wildlife. The last part of Phase I will be Jeff Howarth putting information to date into GIS maps that are due to the CC on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Successful fundraising to date – less than \$1000 to meet total project proposal and that not needed until summer '25. We still have the potential for funds from 2 grant applications. Sophie has 10 trail cameras on loan from ANR and will also deploy the CC's 5 cameras so we need to purchase just batteries and memory storage. Locations of cameras TBD.

2. Winter Wildlife Tracking Workshop (Mary)

January 6<sup>th</sup> general workshop for all – families invited. May need to manage if too many people want to attend. This will be followed by more intensive tracking training on Jan 20<sup>th</sup> for people willing to participate in collecting data for the project over the next 1-2 yrs. Sophie will conduct a virtual meeting prior to this training to provide background. Locations for both tracking sessions TBD.

3. Review and Discussion of Blog Options

Discussion regarding how best to meet goals for projects and what platform to use near and longer term. Decision reached that anyone posting will use Instagram only and we will evaluate how many people are following, if we feel we are achieving goals, etc. and report back for discussion in ~6 months. Also will explore what options there are to use the updated Town website, but that is likely to be at least a year off.

#### New Business

1. CWSP (Clean Water Service Provider) - availability of funding for projects. ACRPC is the CWSP for the Otter Creek Basin, RFP here: [https://acrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/B3\\_CWSP.pdf](https://acrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/B3_CWSP.pdf) (Andrea)

Need to understand if funding will even be available beyond current round 3 (AL will check with ACRPC on this); however, primary evaluation criteria is phosphorus runoff reduction, so not sure any of projects Cornwall might put forward would achieve this. Decision, given the current effort on Where the Wild Things Are project, that CC will not pursue looking into funding in 2024 but will revisit in the future if funding continues to be available.

2. Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act - Implementation Webinar key take-aways (Andrea)

Being headed up by VT Housing and Conservation Board and ANR with the work being done by Nature for Justice, a global NP committed to “transformative impact for people and nature.” This effort, as noted by Amy Sheldon at the ACCC Summit, will be critical in defining how the goals of the Act will be achieved. They are seeking input from key stakeholder groups; on the website currently can recommend interviewees or focus groups to conduct as well as request to be included on a focus group. Can review overview presentation, find link to full act, and the form to submit a suggestion for interviewees, focus groups, etc at this link:

<https://vhcb.org/our-programs/VCSI>

### 3. 2024 Work Plan

Need to develop our 2024 Work Plan. Mary would like us to revisit program initiatives in particular and make sure these are what we want to focus on. Don suggested that CC meetings have limited time for in depth discussion and proposed have a separate working session. Given the holidays, at the January CC meeting we will determine a date for working session. In the meantime, members should review current plan and think about what to focus on next year.

### 4. Time and Day of 2024 CC meetings – Kristina raised that we should have a discussion on the best day/time for CC meetings in the coming year so that we can have participation of all members.

## Updates, Reports and Announcements

### 1. Reports from SB, DRB and CPC (Don, Katherine, Mary)

SB: Appointed new town clerk – Laura Federoff to take over duties from Sue in March. Decision to have separate clerk and treasurer (roles that Sue played) – appointment of new treasurer pending.

### 2. Fish and Wildlife planned acquisition of West Street property, response from Will Duane 11/27 (Katherine, Mary)

Haven't closed on property yet; further approvals required. An abutting neighbor will be requesting that F&W install a gate at that top of the farm road to prevent vehicular traffic on the F&W parcel.

### 3. Alicia Daniel program. Reading the Landscape walk.(Andrea)

Looking at late April ideally or sometime in May with 11am start if a Saturday and 1pm if a Sunday.

Will be asking people to register and taking emails in case need to contact. Limiting to ~20 people and 16yo and up. AL has contacted Alicia to get new date and will share at January meeting.

### 4. The impact of Otter Creek Watershed (OCW) Insect Control District pesticide spraying on nearby bat colonies in Cornwall (Mike)

Mike reached out to Barb Kroll in Salisbury saying that a letter of support is most we can do – no response as yet.

### 5. CC Website Update (Katherine)

Emily and Katherine have agreed that updates will take place on the following timetable: Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, Mar 15<sup>th</sup>, July 15<sup>th</sup>, and Sept 15<sup>th</sup>. Emily still willing to do these, but acknowledges she has competing obligations

### 6. Community Science Kits ARPA project (Mike, Don)

The Cornwall Library committee meeting is on Dec 15<sup>th</sup> at which time Sue will present the concept for the Committee's review and input. Don will report on the outcome at the next CC meeting.

### 7. ANR workshop, Environmental Leadership Training I: From Science to Planning (Andrea)

Good program to consider – very helpful in learning to navigate BioFinder and the Planning Atlas. AL will take “Unit 2 From Planning to Action” next year

8. Topics for Jan 2024 town newsletter (Andrea)
  - Add brief something on the CC Summit
  - Update on habitat connectivity project (main focus)
  - Invitation to join the CC!

Jan 9, 2024 meeting Chair: Don Recording secretary: Katherine

Will continue with assigning alphabetically by last name with substitutions made as needed.

Feb: Chair Mary, Sec Don

Mar: Chair Andrea, Sec Mary

Apr: Chair Kristina, Sec Andrea

May: Chair Mike, Sec Kristina

June: Chair Katherine, Sec Mike

July: Chair Don, Sec Katherine

And so on.

Newsletter: January '24 (December-Andrea), April '24 (March-Mary), July '24 (June-Kristina)