

**Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, February 23, 2024 (1:00-2:30 pm)**  
**Cornwall Town Hall**

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

Also present: Jeff Howarth, Associate Professor of Geography – Middlebury College and Sophie Mazowita, Consulting Ecologist – Tracking Connection.

Meeting Chair: Mary Dodge

Recording Secretary: Don Burns

Meeting recorded.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/F-ze47O1OzYkH2frNuHNTmVms9Ifq0nZyCu1uidhW3aaW9LBx2Puxt5ncfYia4q.3Y3nWLbIOvew9Wyw>

Passcode: wy0ggq!?

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm and adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Approval of the minutes of January 9, 2024.

Old Business

1. Inventory of Cornwall Habitat Connectivity Blocks. Discussion of Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Atlas, Phase I prioritization areas and Phase II fieldwork timetable. See recording for details.
  - a. Jeff Howarth reviewed overall format and functionality of the Atlas
    - i. Mike interested in how Atlas can be used for planning.
    - ii. Mary interested in the Atlas ending with maps and descriptions that identify areas of connected landscape and the routes animals are using in moving through and between them.
    - iii. Don interested in more interactivity in the Atlas such as accessing photographs and info from iNaturalist.
    - iv. Future additions proposed for Atlas
      1. Glossary
      2. User Guide / Instructional Video
      3. “White Canvas” layer
  - b. Sophie Mazowita reviewed concept of track lines in the Atlas as well as High Priority and Priority designations.
  - c. Next Steps:
    - i. Confirm volunteer trackers and protocols for this winter Phase II fieldwork.
    - ii. Trail camera placement scheduled for the spring.
      1. Volunteers will periodically check and download data.
      2. Trail cam results will inform 2024/2025 winter tracking plan.

2. 2024 Work Plan (Andrea, Katherine, Mary)
  - a. Discussion tabled for March meeting.
3. Membership Recruitment
  - a. Andrea and Mary have reached out to a few potential CCC members with little to no response to date.
  - b. Mike proposed having one-hour vs hour-and-a-half monthly meetings to reduce time commitment for CCC members. Agreed to try this starting with the March meeting.

#### New Business

1. Town Meeting Announcements (Saturday, March 2nd, 10:00 am)
  - a. Introduction of Habitat Connectivity Block Inventory and call for volunteers (Mary)
  - b. Alicia Daniel Guided Nature Walk (Andrea)
  - c. Membership Recruitment (Mike)
2. 2024 Amphibian Road Monitoring (Mary)
  - a. Mary unable to manage program this year.
  - b. Consider approaching Middlebury College to manage or past volunteers to participate. Mike to contact Middlebury College.
  - c. Mary to develop list of steps involved with management of program.

#### Updates, Reports and Announcements

1. Reports from CSB, CPC and DRB (Don, Katherine, Mary)
  - a. CSB: No report.
  - b. CPC: Several members of the CPC met with the DRB on February 7th (Katherine was not able to be there), as a preliminary step in the updating of Cornwall's zoning and subdivision regulations. The Town's attorney had been asked to review the new Act 47 legislation (Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone=HOME) and advise on how it would affect Cornwall's regulations—this was a major topic of discussion at this meeting. The discussion most relevant to the CCC would seem to be the potential review of minor subdivisions by the Zoning Administrator instead of the DRB.
  - c. DRB: CORA hearing on Wednesday, March 6 @ 7:00PM.
2. F&W Purchase and Management of West Street property (Katherine, Mary)
  - a. This process seems to be moving along. F&W has prepared a draft map showing the proposed location of parking and a gate. It seems advisable for the CCC to send a more detailed letter to F&W at this point, requesting the map and enumerating our desires for the property. Perhaps this topic can be on the March agenda.
3. Alicia Daniel Guided Nature Walk (Andrea)
  - a. Scheduled for Saturday, April 20th 11:00-2:00 pm (rain date of April 21<sup>st</sup>).
  - b. Andrea has prepared notice/flyer.
  - c. Will post with Laura and Front Porch Forum in mid-March.
4. Gardens/Landscaping for CORA project (Andrea)
  - a. Nothing new to report on CORA landscaping/gardens.
  - b. Andrea is now on the CORA.
  - c. Just submitted CORA site plan for DRB review.

- d. Group is finalizing submissions for two large funding grants; one is a matching grant that will need community donations of \$20k (to get an additional \$40K).
5. Cornwall Swamp bat colony and bat house protection (Mike)
  - a. Unusually warm winter (no ice) has hampered efforts to install bat house protection.
  - b. May have to postpone until next winter.
6. CC Website Update (Katherine)
  - a. Send Katherine website revisions by March 1<sup>st</sup> for mid-March CCC website update by Emily May.
7. Community Science Kits ARPA project (Mike, Don)
  - a. Both the Cornwall School and the Cornwall Library Committee have expressed interest but need to coordinate interest/efforts for this potential initiative.
  - b. Mike to contact Cornwall School.
  - c. Having introduced the concept, the CCC will no longer be involved in developing this program.
  - d. If the School and/or Library are interested in obtaining ARPA funds for this project, they should submit a request to the CSB.
8. Katherine's CCC Tenure (All)
  - a. February was Katherine's last CCC meeting as she ends her tenure on the CCC in early-March.
  - b. The CCC acknowledged Katherine's years of valuable service to the CCC and that she truly will be missed as an active, engaging, and productive member.

#### Action Items

1. March 22 CCC meeting to be held 1:00-2:00 pm (1 hour vs 1 ½ hours).
2. Mary, Andrea and Mike to make Town Meeting announcements as described above.
3. Mike to contact Middlebury College to determine interest in managing and participating in Amphibian Road Monitoring program.
4. Mary to make list of tasks for management of Amphibian Road Monitoring program.
5. Andrea to post notice of Alicia Daniels walk in mid-March.
6. Any desired website revisions should be sent to Katherine by March 1.
7. Mike to contact Cornwall School regarding coordinating interest in Community Science Kits with Cornwall Library Committee.
8. Andrea to include 2024 Work Plan discussion in March agenda.
9. Andrea to include discussion of potential letter to Vermont Fish & Wildlife regarding plans for the West Street property in March agenda.

Next Meeting: March 22, Andrea: Meeting Chair, Mary: Recording Secretary

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

April 26: Chair Kristina, Sec Andrea  
 May 24: Chair Mike, Sec Kristina

June 28: Chair Don, Sec Mike  
July 26: Chair Mary, Sec Don