

Cornwall Conservation Commission (CCC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024 (7:00-8:30 pm)
Cornwall Town Hall and Zoom

CCC members present: Katherine Branch, Don Burns, Mary Dodge, Andrea Landsberg and Kristina Sargent

Meeting Chair: Don Burns; Recording Secretary: Katherine Branch

Minutes from December 12, 2023 were approved.

Katherine notified the CCC members that she will not be asking to be reappointed to the CCC.

Old Business

1. Inventory of Cornwall Habitat Connectivity Blocks update. Phase I is scheduled to be completed by mid-January 2024. Preliminary maps are due at that time as well as prioritization for field visits in Phase II. The workshops in January should lead into the field work. The maps will be distributed by Mary and then discussed by the CCC. There was a suggestion that Sophie Mazowita be invited to the February CCC meeting—Mary will invite Sophie.

2. Winter Wildlife public Tracking Workshop. This workshop was rescheduled due to lack of snow. It has been rescheduled to January 28th from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Cornwall Town Hall (snow or no snow). On January 15th (7-8 pm) is the Winter Track ID zoom presentation, taking what Sophie describes as "a deep dive into wildlife track ID and how to document wildlife tracks and sign." It will be followed by a small-group, field experience on Saturday, January 20th (1-3:30 pm) that will further prepare volunteers to distinguish tracks and signs of the target species that will be monitored and tracked this winter.

3. 2024 Work Plan – Suggestions to be included in the work plan (but not necessarily limited to):

- continuing Green Up day cleanup of Swamp Road parking lot as well as an educational table at the drop-off
- educational program on invasive species
- Fish & Wildlife walk and/or public forum for the West Street property once F&W acquires it
- presentation about bats by Alyssa Bennett
- work with Planning Commission on zoning and subdivision regulation revision

One important consideration is to better match the number and extent of projects to the limited number of members on the Commission, so we don't take on too much. Andrea will email the 3-person work group (Mary, Katherine and Andrea) some potential work session meeting times prior to January 27th.

4. Time and Day of 2024 CC meetings discussion. This item will be tabled because the members with the tightest schedules were not present for this agenda item. These members will be asked to give suggestions about what days and times would be best for them.

New Business

Membership Recruitment. Announcement and recruitment at Town Meeting. Katherine will reach out to a newer town resident to see if she is interested. The tracking workshops might be opportunities to generate interest in membership. Outreach to the elementary school might be another idea. Commission members will reach out individually to recruit new members.

Updates, Reports and Announcements

1. Reports from SB, CPC and DRB. SB: The Select Board has appointed Laura Fetterolf as the new Town Clerk and Nick Gill as the new Town Treasurer. They will begin work in those positions as of Town Meeting day. CPC: There will be a kick-off meeting of a potential housing work group on Thursday, January 11th at 7:00 pm at Town Hall. The CPC also has written a letter of support for CORA (Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area). A discussion ensued about how the CCC might be involved in helping the Town Plan be implemented, with one idea being to invite herpetologist Jim Andrews from Salisbury, who has worked with the State on road crossings to a conversation with the Cornwall road crew.
2. Fish and Wildlife planned acquisition of West Street property. This discussion will be planned for a future meeting, possibly including a gate at the kiosk, , Idea for the work plan.
3. Alicia Daniel program. Reading the Landscape walk. Saturday, April 20th 11:00 – 1:00 pm with backup date of 21st with a time closer to 1:00 pm. Will be posted on FPF, posters at Town Hall, Town-wide email. Attendees will pre-register with a maximum number of twenty people.
4. Gardens/Landscaping for CORA project update and discussion. Andrea is meeting with several people who are interested in working on this project on January 10th.
5. CC Website Update. The schedule has revised to be December 15th, March 15th, June 15th and September 15th. Emily May has made almost all of the December changes to the web site.
6. Community Science Kits ARPA project. Sue Johnson and the Library Committee reviewed the concept. The Library Committee is interested but doesn't want to conflict with the school's interest. Agenda item for next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Mary will contact Sophie to ask her to attend the February CCC meeting to inform CCC members about how the Phase I maps and prioritization areas for the inventory were developed, and how they will be used.
2. Andrea will schedule a work session with Mary and Katherine to look at the 2023-24 CCC work plan. Prior to January 27th.

3. Mike and Kristina will consult about the best days and times for CCC meetings in 2024 and will discuss the February CCC meeting.
4. Agenda items for upcoming meetings.
 - a. February: Presentation by Sophie Mazowita; community science kits (Don and Mike); time and day of 2024 CC meetings
 - b. Meeting date to discuss these items to be determined: input to Fish & Wildlife regarding management of the West Street property acquisition (gate at top of road; habitat connector between two wooded areas; public forum or walk); assign member to coordinate with Emily May on the CCC web site; assign October 2024 newsletter.

Next Meeting: February 13, Mary: Meeting Chair, Don: Recording Secretary

Feb: Chair Mary, Sec Don

Mar: Chair Andrea, Sec Mary

Apr: Chair Kristina, Sec Andrea

May: Chair Mike, Sec Kristina

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