

**TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
AT 6:00 P.M. ON
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016
AT HOLLEY HALL, BRISTOL VT**

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Ken Johnson (KJ), Chair; Pete Diminico (PD) Vice-Chair; Katie Reilly (KR), Clerk; David Henderson (DH); David Rosen (DR); Kristen Underwood (KU); Randy Durand (RD); Devlin Rutherford (DvR).

ALSO ATTENDING: No public present

- I. Call to order.
Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m.
- II. Public comment period.
- III. Addition of items to the agenda.
None.
- IV. Approval of minutes of 10 December 2015.
There were corrections regarding the Saunders Access drone project (add UVM connection), and the proposed meeting with Agency of Natural Resources regarding Zoning Regulations.
DR moved that the minutes of 10 December 2015 be approved as amended; DvR seconded; approved by all.
- V. Correspondence
Pete received an e-mail from Peter Grant regarding the Act 64 Water Quality regulations providing links to websites pertaining to how municipalities will have to comply with new regulations. Pete recommended that Commissioners review the information. He will forward the email to Commissioners.
- VI. Old Business
 - A. Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Update regarding the stormwater management project at the corner of Main St. and Mountain St.
The project is not yet complete, still needing to have some of the pavement removed to allow stormwater to drain into the detention device. The Commission will continue to track the progress.
 - B. New Haven River project by Sonia DeYoung, focusing on the New Haven River Watershed, funded by Vermont River Conservancy: discussion of presentation to New Haven Conservation Commission.
Several commissioners went to the presentation which had approximately 80 - 100 people in attendance. Pete described the presentation as a compilation of anecdotes between Sonia and the residents of the area she met on her adventure. Great turnout. (Remove item from agenda).

- C. Stormwater Infrastructure: project with Steve Libby of the Vermont River Conservancy (VR) regarding a proposal to the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) for a Flood Resilience and Climate Change Grant; update.
Kristen said that Steve Libby did get the grant. She anticipates he will be present at an upcoming meeting to discuss our involvement.
(Remove item from agenda).
- D. Bristol Village tree inventory: Follow-up coordination Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program; update.
Randy related that the implementation plan is in the works: the draft plan has to be prepared by the end of the month, and is being worked on by Claire Tebbs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. The final plan will offer a range of recommended items to be accomplished based on timing for implementation: immediate, short term, and long term.
There was some discussion as to the need to plant 106 trees, as recommended in the original inventory. Town funds do not currently provide for purchasing and planting new trees, but rather are limited to the removal of numerous hazard trees. Any efforts to include new plantings may have to be delayed. One suggestion offered was for the Conservation Commission to collaborate with service agencies in town to purchase and plant trees, assisted by funds from the Conservation Reserve Fund. Randy will forward these comments to Claire for incorporation into the draft plan.
- E. Saunders River Access: update on unmanned aircraft (drone) flyover by University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Lab, funded by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, to obtain topographic data and local conditions; scheduled for December 22, 2015.
The UVM unmanned aircraft (drone) did an abbreviated flyover of the New Haven River in the vicinity of the Saunders Access as scheduled. Kristen did have some preliminary mapping to show what the UVM drone had captured. However the weather was not good; light rain interfered with the good capture of data. Kristen expects another flight this spring or summer.
- F. Sycamore Park: completion of riparian treatment to reduce erosion of the river banks; follow up after recent high water levels.
The sideslope in the riparian area by the parking lot held up well during recent heavy rains.
(Remove item from agenda.)
- G. Monkton Agricultural and Natural Areas Committee: meeting on Sunday 24 January 2016.
The Commission had received an email from Laura Farrell of Monkton's Agricultural and Natural Areas Committee concerning an Intertown Conservation Meeting at Holley Hall which she arranged for January 24th, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. None of the Conservation Commissioners were sure they could be available for the meeting on Sunday, but they will coordinate before the meeting.
- H. Potential changes to Zoning Regulations regarding river corridor protection; update on meeting with Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and Planning Commission.
Kristen explained that she had offered to make arrangements to have Rebecca Pfeiffer of the ANR Department of Environmental Conservation River Management section meet with the Planning Commission, but was not able to set a date at this time. ANR has been charged with the responsibility of working with municipalities to provide protection for flood plain areas. This is part of an initiative to improve the quality of surface runoff flowing into Lake Champlain, and is tied to grant incentives.

VII. New Business

- A. Hogback Walking Trail: Proposal by the Watershed Center to develop a trail off Mountain Street in Bristol (see attached).

David Brynn of The Watershed Center (TWC) had emailed the Commission regarding the possibility of establishing a hiking trail beginning at property owned by TWC on the south side of Route 17 west of the center of the village referred to as the Mountain Street parcel. The trail would encircle the whole Hogback Mountain using existing trails wherever possible.

Randy had gotten in touch with Kevin Behm of ACRPC who produced a map delineating areas of concern for habitat or protected species, both plant and animal. The area proposed for a trail has numerous qualities that might be impacted by the presence of a trail, or by an increase in human activity in the area.

TWC would have to further evaluate the suitability of the area for a trail, as well as obtain permission from property owners. However, there are many other opportunities for trails in town, including on TWC properties. The Conservation Commission is supportive of efforts to create hiking trails and is willing to look at possible locations. Pete will talk with David Brynn about our discussion.

- B. Request from Vermont Land Trust to use Conservation Reserve Fund monies to support a farm conservation project in Bristol.

Kristen had been contacted by Al Karnatz of the Vermont Land Trust concerning Conservation Commission interest in the preliminary conservation efforts to preserve an agricultural parcel in Bristol. Land negotiations are underway; consequently the exact location of the parcel cannot be announced at this time. However, given the prime agricultural soils on the parcel, its hydrologic connection to the New Haven River, and its size (approximately 80 acres), the parcel is considered by VLT to be a high value project.

The Conservation Commission by consensus is supportive of the project and would like more information as the project develops.

- C. Conservation Reserve Fund: appropriation request in 2016 Town Budget.

Town Manager Therese Kirby requested that the Commission consider reducing the funding amount requested in the Town Budget for the conservation Reserve Fund from the previous \$10,000 to \$5,000 due to the numerous high expenses incurred by the Town in the 2016 budget.

After much discussion, DH moved and DR seconded that the Conservation Commission should continue with its \$10,000 appropriation request. Approved by all.

- D. Bristol Conservation Commission Annual Report for 2015.

Not discussed.

VIII. Other

IX. Upcoming events

A.

X. Next Meeting Schedule: Thursday, 11 February 2016.

XI. Adjournment

DH moved that the meeting be adjourned; RD seconded; approved by all.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.