

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
9 FEBRUARY 2017
AT HOLLEY HALL, BRISTOL VT**

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Ken Johnson (KJ), Chair; Pete Diminico (PD) Vice-Chair; Katie Reilley (KR), Clerk; David Henderson (DH); Kristen Underwood (KU); Randy Durand (RD); Richard Butz (RB); Carolyn Dash (CD); Jim Stapleton (JS).

ALSO ATTENDING: David Rosen; Gabe Andrews; Sandra Murphy; Reg Dearborn

- I. Call to order.
Meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m.

- II. Public comment period.
Dave Rosen present for general discussion.
Gabe Andrews present to discuss his program on Ecosystem Services in the Riparian Corridor. See Item VI. B. below.
Sandra Murphy and Reg Dearborn arrived around 6:30 to discuss the proposed south Street walk. See Item VI. C. below.

- III. Addition of items to the agenda.
No items added.

- IV. Approval of minutes of 12 January 2017.
KR moved that the minutes of 12 January 2017 be approved; PD seconded; approved by all.

- V. Correspondence.
E-mails related to items listed below:
 - Email from Therese Kirby to BCC regarding resignation of Dave Rosen and Selectboard appointment of three candidates recommended by BCC at their 30 January 2017 meeting.
 - Email from Laura Farrell regarding natural resource mapping for Town Meeting Day.

- VI. Old Business
 - A. Conservation Commission membership: update on action by Bristol Selectboard; welcome to new members.
According to the Selectboard minutes of January 30, 2017, there were three appointments to the Bristol Conservation Committee [sic]: Carolyn Dash and Richard Butz, serving through 2020, and Jim Stapleton, serving through 2018.
Ken welcomed the new members and spoke to the neutrality of the Commission: individuals are free to express their opinion in public, but no one individual speaks for the Commission without consensus. The Commission acts as a source of information and education, refraining from political argument. There was general agreement that it was a large part of why the Commission has been successful. He also felt that the

Commission has had an extraordinary and very successful relationship with the Town's administration, as well as the residents themselves.

B. Flood Resilience Master's Project: presentation by Gabe Andrews on New Haven River narratives.

Gabe introduced his latest slide presentation, which he is hoping to bring to the Planning Commission: "Ecosystem Services and River Corridors". As part of his participation in the Place-based Landscape Analysis and Community Engagement (PLACE) program, he is continuing to develop information to present to the public that addresses the values of the river corridor. The term "Ecosystem Services" refers to the goods and services produced by ecosystems that benefit people. The New Haven River riparian corridor provides services such as erosion control, flood energy reduction, water purification, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

As part of his information gathering, Gabe interviewed people accessing the Bartlett Falls area. He took the responses of 156 interviews of people who did not live in Addison County as a means of evaluating how many people would be spending money as part of their visit to Bartlett Falls. This financial aspect adds significantly to the overall value of the river and its corridor. Gabe also mapped the buildings within the river corridor, and quantified their value to describe current investments at risk.

Gabe summarized his presentation with a discussion of state floodplain management programs that are designed to minimize losses of structures within the river corridor. For information about how Middlebury quantified the values of the Middlebury River after Tropical Storm Irene, he referred to an article available through the UVM website entitled "Quantifying flood mitigation services: The economic value of Otter Creek wetlands and floodplains to Middlebury" authored by Keri B. Watson et al.

Gabe hopes to present his analyses to the Planning Commission, and to encourage them to look more critically at zoning within the river corridor.

C. South Street Historical Walk: update; discussion about signage options.

Sandra Murphy (alexandramurphy.com) and Reg Dearborn were present to discuss the South Street Historical walk. Sandra and Kristen had been to the site prior to the meeting.

Sandra described a spectrum of goods and services she could recommend to meet the needs of the Commission and the Historical Society, ranging from small, handmade signage (done by volunteers) to large weatherproof signs that might last 15 years. The focus of interest could be limited to visual access to the site from South Street, or could be expanded to other historical features in the Bristol Village area.

The discussion generated a wide range of possibilities. Sandra did provide some pricing, but the Commission would need to come up with a plan of what they're considering. At a minimum, Sandra would need the number and size of signs before she could come up with an overall estimate of cost.

Kristen will be looking for possible grant opportunities in the meantime, and will be discussing opportunities with the Historical Society as well.

D. Paul Fuller site: control of Japanese Knotweed: coordination with New Haven River Anglers, Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Vermont River Conservancy; update. No new information.

- E. **Saunders River Access:** coordination with New Haven River Anglers on maintenance; weed whacking assistance; spring transplanting and watering tree saplings; update. Dave related his discussion with the New Haven River Anglers board regarding maintenance of the Saunders River Access. He was hopeful that the Anglers would provide some support, either financial or physical, for the maintenance of the area. He also obtained a quote from a local person who might be willing to weed whack the area.
- F. **Green Stormwater Infrastructure:** Update on status of Vermont Community Fund Grant. Kristen said she had not heard from Steve Libby, and that the next round of grant applications has been delayed.
- G. **Bristol Village tree inventory:** Follow-up coordination Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program; update. Nothing to report.
- H. **Eagle Park:** on-going maintenance discussion; workday to be scheduled. The schedule will be determined this spring.
- I. **New Haven River, Bartlett Falls:** Addison County River Watch Collaborative to install signpost providing information on water quality; to be done in the spring. The signposts will be placed once the spring thaw has occurred.

VII. New Business

- A. **Town Natural Resource Map for Town Meeting Day.** There was general interest in having a map available for Town Meeting. The purpose of the map would be to have residents mark where they've seen wildlife within the last year, and would be used as a means of discussing our natural resources. Richard has already contacted Kevin Behm about putting together a wildlife map and Richard will build a display for it.

VI. Old Business (continued)

- B. **Flood Resilience Master's project:** presentation by Gabe Andrews on New Haven River narratives. There was a follow-up discussion about how the Conservation Commission could support Gabe's presentation and encourage the Planning Commission to review his recommendations. DH moved that the BCC minutes include a statement of endorsement by the BCC of the river corridor presentation by Gabe Andrews, and encourage the Planning Commission to host the same presentation; seconded by RB. During discussion Pete indicated he wanted to make a motion the BCC should study the issue and then draft a position statement regarding river corridor protection. Dave then amended his motion to draft a memo to the Planning Commission endorsing Gabe's presentation and encouraging them to host the same presentation; seconded by RB; approved by all. The topic will be added to the next agenda so that the Commission might more comprehensively discuss the issue. Pete will draft a position statement on the topic for the next meeting.

VIII. Other

Katie requested information regarding the new commissioners to add to the Commissioners List.

Also the Commission By-Laws should be reviewed and updated if needed.

IX. Upcoming events

X. Next Meeting Schedule: Thursday, 9 March 2017.

XI. Adjournment

DH moved that the meeting be adjourned; RB seconded; approved by all.
Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.