

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

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

ALSO ATTENDING:

- I. Call to order.
Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m.
- II. Public comment period.
No public present.
- III. Addition of items to the agenda.
RB requested some discussion about including a public information area for Town Meeting and Voting Days.
- IV. Approval of minutes of 9 February 2017.
KU moved that the minutes of 9 February 2017 be approved; RB seconded; approved by all.
- V. Correspondence.
E-mails related to items listed below.
- VI. Old Business
 - A. Conservation Commission membership: Review of By-Laws and additional information for new members including Open Meeting Law (see attached).
The new Commissioners were given the Town's Conflict of Interest Policy. We also discussed the need to limit discussions using email and the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. There was general discussion about the benefits of reviewing the by-laws, including the purposes of the Conservation Commission, as well as other parts. Commissioners will review the by-laws and email their thoughts for the upcoming meetings. Randy expressed interest in exploring the special interests of the individual commissioners to better focus their expertise.
 - B. Flood Resilience Master's Project: update. (See also Item VII. C. below.)
The Commission had sent a memo to the Planning Commission requesting that they review Gabe Andrew's presentation; however, they did not send a response in writing to the Conservation Commission. As requested Katie placed a copy of the original memo in the Planning Commission's inbox (during this meeting) with a request for a response. Sue Kavanagh, the Planning Commission Chair, is no longer a member of the Planning Commission, so the response may be delayed.
 - C. South Street Historical Walk: update.
No recent actions.

- D. Paul Fuller site: control of Japanese Knotweed: coordination with New Haven River Anglers, Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Vermont River Conservancy; update. Kristen related that Vermont River Conservancy did receive a grant (approximately \$800 per year) from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, which will allow treatment of Japanese knotweed over the next two years.
- E. Saunders River Access: coordination with New Haven River Anglers on maintenance; weed whacking assistance; spring transplanting and watering tree saplings; update. Kristen reported that the property definitely needs some weed whacking to release the young trees, Carolyn thought she might be able to gather support from college students; Kristen will contact Stever Bartlett for help from his football team.
- F. Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Update on status of Vermont Community Fund Grant.
Kristen still has not heard back from Steve Libby regarding the status of his grant. However, the Commission is still very interested in continuing with the implementation of improving stormwater infrastructure. Richard discussed developing a plan to introduce the use of rain barrels; creating a brochure explain “green” stormwater control; possibly involving the Arts Council to decorate rain barrels, then auctioning off the barrels to fund the project. The Commission discussed a target date for this summer, and to have a spot on the Green for the 4th of July activities.
- G. Bristol Village tree inventory: Follow-up coordination Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program; update.
Randy discussed information he had gotten from Therese Kirby concerning “Canopy Grant” opportunities. Applications are due in April, so the Commission will be looking to next year. Hopefully, a Tree Warden and a Tree Advisory Board will be active by then.
- H. Eagle Park: on-going maintenance discussion; update.
Pete wants to power wash the platform to clean it up. Dave Henderson had noted that the public has created a trail through our plantings, creating a shortcut to the platform. He was looking to put up a “Please use the path” sign.
- 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.
Not done yet, but the ground is still frozen.
- J. Town Natural Resource Map for Town Meeting Day: update.
Richard was at Holley Hall with the natural resources map on Monday evening. Numerous people saw the map and noted animals that they had recently seen. The map was not available to people on Voting Day as it was turned around away from people walking through. Richard said he would check to find out if there are restrictions for displaying items in the voting area.

VII. New Business

- A. Discussion of Town Meeting Day and voting results.
The Town Budget was approved; this included \$10,000 for the Conservation Reserve Fund. This will bring the total of available funds up to \$42,000 in July if nothing is expended in the meantime.
- B. Letter of support from BCC for a Better Roads Grant Application on behalf of the Town of Bristol.
Ken authored a letter which was sent on as support for the Town’s grant application. Therese Kirby expressed her thanks.

C. **River Corridor Protection:** Discussion on position statement regarding recommendations to the Planning Commission and Selectboard on river corridor planning and management.

Pete had outlined his thoughts on river corridor planning; however, the Planning Commission will be in a state of change for some time to come, as both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are no longer members. In his notes, Pete referenced the Conservation Commission's earlier input, which has been included in the Town Plan and which advises the town to: "undertake a careful review of the fluvial erosion hazards along major waterways, which may identify a need to regulate development, land alterations..."

Pete was looking to have the language reviewed by the Commission and edited to present a strong statement supporting the protection of river corridors, for presentation to the Planning Commission.

VIII. Other

Randy brought up the coyote hunt recently held in Bristol and was hoping to contact other Conservation Commissions for their approaches to such organized hunts. There was much discussion about how the Conservation Commission should deal with the situation. The general consensus was that the organized hunt was offensive and tarnished Bristol's reputation. The hunt did not effectively deal with reducing the coyote population, as the populations apparently will increase their reproduction rates to maintain a population level. Pete will contact Vermont Fish and Wildlife to follow up on recent studies undertaken by VF&W staff to study Vermont's coyote population. The Commission will continue to follow the issue and develop a compilation of information on coyotes to better take a stand should other such hunts be undertaken.

IX. Upcoming events

X. Next Meeting Schedule: Thursday, 13 April 2017.

XI. Adjournment

KU moved that the meeting be adjourned; RB seconded; approved by all.
Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.