

TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
HELD AT HOLLEY HALL
AT 6:00 P.M. ON
THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 2017

Attending: Ken Johnson, Chair (KJ); Jim Stapleton (JS), Pete Diminico (PD), Dave Henderson (DH), Carolyn Dash (CD), Richard Butz (RB), Kristen Underwood (KU)

Public in attendance: Ian Albinson, Dave Rosen, Zapata Courage, Mark Nelson

I. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 6:10 PM

II. Public comment period.

None offered

III. Addition of items to the agenda.

None offered

IV. Approval of minutes of 13 July 2017.

Motion to approve the minutes: DH; 2nd: JS. Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

V. Correspondence.

E-mails related to items listed below.

- A. Email from Kristen Underwood to Bristol Historical Society dated 8/1/17 transmitting a fundraising flyer for the proposed interpretive sign at Bristol Manufacturing Co.

VII. New Business (taken out of order).

- A. Presentation by Zapata Courage, District Wetland Ecologist, regarding Beaver Meadow wetland classification.

Zapata Courage (VANR Wetland Ecologist) and Mark Nelson (Ripton Conservation Commission) informed the CC about a town of Ripton proposal to reclassify the Beaver Meadows Wetland Complex in Ripton / Bristol from a Class II to a Class 1 wetland designation. They have reached out to the Bristol CC because a proposed 400-foot buffer area surrounding the wetland extends into the southern extent of the town of Bristol. The wetland and buffer area are located wholly within the Green Mountain National Forest and are owned/managed by the US Forest Service. This 66-acre headwaters wetland drains in three directions to headwater regions of both

the New Haven River and Middlebury River watersheds. This is an intact, unfragmented landscape containing rare, threatened and endangered species (e.g., dwarf-shrub bog and poor fen). Of the 10 functions and values wetlands provide (as recognized by State of VT), this area possesses all 10. Exemplary functions / values exhibited by this area include water storage for flood attenuation, natural community composition, and education/research value. Under current land use plans developed by the GMNF, this area is recognized as an ecological special area. Reclassification would provide for expanded buffer areas, and for protection from development in the event (for example) that these lands would ever be considered by GMNF in a swap for other lands. Under reclassification to a Class I wetland, certain uses of the land would still be allowed under VT wetland rules, including logging (subject to GMNF guidelines which are more stringent than VT Acceptable Management Practices), hunting, hiking, and maintenance of nonmotorized recreational trails. The Ripton Conservation Commission aims to submit their application for reclassification this fall; a rule-making process is required including a public comment period. A 3-month to 1-year timeline is expected.

Discussion occurred over the location of this wetland complex – since local knowledge indicates at least two different “Beaver Meadows” wetlands in Bristol. It was confirmed that this is the Beaver Meadow Wetland near Abby Pond accessed from Beaver Meadow Trail (Forest Service Rd 10) off the Upper Notch Road, located in the southern extent of Bristol on lands bordering Ripton.

KU asked where the Bristol town boundary falls on the map provided on the four-page handout. Zapata Courage indicated that the map does not contain the Bristol boundary. It is her understanding that only the proposed 400-foot buffer area of the wetland crosses into Bristol.

DH asked what would happen if boundaries of the wetland changed (under natural causes). Zapata Courage indicated that wetland boundaries do fluctuate over time due to natural processes (e.g., beaver activity), but given the topographic setting of this wetland complex the boundary is not expected to change significantly in a lateral direction.

PD made a motion that the Bristol Conservation Commission support the Ripton Conservation Commission petition for reclassification of the Beaver Meadow Wetland Complex from Class II to a Class I designation. RB seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

VI. Old Business

- A. Trails Around Bristol (formerly itemized as Addison County Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan): discussion with Porter Knight regarding biking and hiking trails in the Town of Bristol.

Ian Albinson provided an update on recent activities of the ad hoc Trails Around Bristol group, since Porter Knight could not attend the meeting. Ian read from the

notes of Porter Knight summarizing the Trail Design working group meeting that was held on August 9 (see attached notes).

B. South Street Historical Walk: update.

KU reported that a fundraising flier has been formalized for the campaign to raise funds for historic interpretive signage at the South Street former Bristol Manufacturing Co. site (see attached). In a phone call with Jen Meyers earlier in the day, KU learned that two checks have been received to date for a total of \$300. KU will write thank you notes for each contribution received. Recent email correspondence with the Bristol Historical Society members revealed that they also plan to contribute funds – KU will attend the August 17 BHS meeting and make sure that the fundraising flier is sent to their membership. KU will also adapt information in the flier for a series of Front Porch Forum notices, and will distribute fliers by hand to local businesses. Ian Albinson requested a copy of the flier and will disseminate to Bristol CORE members.

KU and Ian Albinson, Exec Dir of Bristol CORE, met on July 20 to discuss consistency of signage around town – one of the goals in the Strategic Plan for the Bristol CORE group. A composite logo with alternate color scheme or pattern for the “cultural”, “historical” and “recreational” resources in Bristol is envisioned. KU stay in touch with Ian and with the trails group as design for the historical interpretive sign begins this fall.

C. Town of Bristol Resources: Disseminating information about the natural and cultural resources of Bristol.

CD has been in touch with Ian, who is developing a marketing brochure for downtown Bristol with the Addison County Chamber of Commerce. The brochure will be patterned after a Vergennes brochure, and will contain some space to identify recreational sites in town. Due to space limitations, they anticipate highlighting only the Bristol Rec Club, the town green, Bartlett’s Falls/ Eagle Park, Sycamore Park and The Watershed Center. In a later project, CD and Ian will be developing a brochure titled “Exploring Bristol” (or similar title) that will have more room to include other natural and recreational sites in Bristol including Memorial Park, Saunders River Access, etc.

D. Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Discussion with Steve Libby regarding the status of Vermont Community Fund Grant.

Discussion tabled to the September meeting, when Steve Libby can attend.

E. Eagle Park: on-going maintenance discussion; update; update on efforts to repair damage from heavy rains.

The ADA ramp was repaired on Saturday, August 5, with help from Pete Diminico, Ken Johnson, Dave Henderson, Katie Reilley and Kristen Underwood. Much appreciation is extended to Peeker Heffernan who delivered 4 yards of SurePak to the site, and to Craig Brown of Brown’s Tree and Aerial Service who delivered and

operated a skid-steer to the site to distribute the Sure-pak to the eroded section of the ramp. Stone was spread and leveled by shovel and rake, tamped with a power-tamper, and the Universal Fishing Platform was cleared of debris and grime using a pressure washer. The repaired ramp held up to intense rains later that morning and was observed in full use again by swimmers, anglers and picnickers on Sunday.

- F. Conservation Commission Membership: on-going discussion of special interests of commissioners.
Discussion tabled to next meeting.
- G. River Corridor Protection: discussion of memorandum sent to the Planning Commission regarding river corridor planning.
KU noted that Sacha Pealer of VTANR River Management Section is scheduled to attend the September 19 Planning Commission meeting at 7 PM.
- H. Paul Fuller site: control of Japanese Knotweed: update on work done May 25, 2017.
KU reported that she and RD accompanied Steve Libby, Vermont River Conservancy, to a meeting with Brady and Paul Fuller on Sat July 22. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss options for ongoing management of the riparian buffer on Fuller lands that is subject to a river corridor easement (stewarded by Vermont River Conservancy) and a 15-year lease with the USDA Farm Service Agency under the Conservation Reserve Program (which expires in 2026). Following the meeting, KU put Brady Fuller in touch with Ben Gabos, VT Agency of Ag, re: specific options under the CRP program to help control invasive weeds like Japanese Knotweed and wild parsnip. Herbicide treatment of the Japanese Knotweed, paid for under a LCBP grant to VRC, is scheduled for mid-August – to be carried out by licensed herbicide applicator, Robert Hyam. The LCBP grant contains funds for a similar treatment next year, but not for years beyond that.
- I. Saunders River Access: coordination regarding maintenance, spring transplanting and watering tree saplings; update.
KU reported that Pam Stefanek of the Otter Creek NRC is applying for grant funds to purchase tree and shrub saplings for spring 2018 planting. KU will coordinate volunteers from Bristol CC, New Haven River Anglers and Middlebury College ski team for the spring planting. PD suggested that a maintenance plan is needed to ensure greater survivability of the young trees/shrubs – to include more frequent weed wacking beginning earlier in the year, and watering if needed.
- J. Vermont Agency of Natural Resources website BioFinder: upcoming presentation at September meeting by Monica Przyperhart of VT ANR.
Monica Przyperhart will attend the Sept 14 CC meeting to provide approximately ½-hour of hands-on instruction in use of BioFinder. JS will suggest to her the Beaver Meadows Wetland Complex as a possible demonstration site. CC members should bring a laptop if they are so inclined.

K. Notch Road clean-up: discussion.

No word from Therese Kirby on a scheduled date for clean up.

L. Roleau (formerly Farr) Farm: Vermont Land Trust wild parsnip control.

KU noted that Clarice Culter has left VLT to take another position. No word from VLT re: ongoing work days for wild parsnip on the Roleau Farm.

VIII. Other

KJ noted that communications between the Bristol CC and the Town Administrator/ Selectboard became somewhat strained recently, regarding coordination of repairs at Eagle Park. When frustrations rise to the level that norms of courtesy are abandoned, it may be best to pass along communication tasks to others.

IX. Events

Sat. August 26, 9AM – Noon: Trail work at South St / Bristol Manufac. Co. site

Sat. Sept 9, 9AM – Noon: Trail work at South St / Bristol Manufac. Co. site

Tues, Sept 19, 7 PM – Planning Commission meeting re: river corridor planning/zoning

X. Next Meeting Schedule: Thursday, 14 September 2017.

XI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: DH; 2nd: RB. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Kristen Underwood