

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
February 17, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Byron Quinn, Cyndy Kozara, Al Alessi, Lynn Peterson,
MEMBERS ABSENT: Lea Kachadorian, Bethany Powers, One Vacancy
OTHERS PRESENT: Lina Hristova, Michael Brands

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

II. MINUTES

The minutes of January 20, 2016 were approved as submitted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Conservation Commission Meeting - Lynn Peterson

Mr. Peterson gave a brief report on last November's state wide Annual Conservation Commission meeting. There were 12 different discussion groups presented.

Jens Hilke conducted the first session which covered the basic guidelines under which a Conservation Commission operates. He also mentioned the importance of meeting with the other bodies in local government, especially the Select Board as they hold the purse strings. Only 62% of towns in Vermont have a Conservation Commission. Therefore it is important for existing commissions to help one another. Mr. Hilke stressed that working with other towns is especially important for the wildlife corridors.

Chair Quinn mentioned a moose requires a 37 acre area for living purposes, food and breeding opportunities. This acreage is larger than most towns. When one subtracts the built out areas of a town, it becomes obvious that large animals require land within multiple municipalities. This stresses the need to establish dedicated corridors in the undeveloped sections of a town.

The Town Planner stated the Town Plan supports a link with the four towns that join at Woodstock's southwest corner - Bridgewater, Reading and Plymouth. Progress on this has been slow. He has been discussing this with Peter Fellows, a Plymouth resident and staff member at TRORC.

A second session on forestry led to a discussion of climate change, carbon storage and wildlife habitats. Local foresters Gerry Hawkes and Patrick Bartlett were mentioned as good sources of information. It would be great to arrange a forestry forum with either one as a main speaker. The forum could be used for interaction with other bodies such as the Select Board and Planning Commission, and the local community.

Forest economy was another strong topic of conversation. The rural quality of Vermont was highlighted. The state is composed of numerous small population centers. Most states have a major city or two where the majority of the residents live. Alaska, although considered a rural state, has three major cities where the majority of its residents live.

Mr. Alessi, reflecting on his participation with the Sustainable Woodstock Transportation Committee, noted a difficult problem for rural states such as Vermont is that the dispersed population makes improvements in public transportation extremely difficult. Reducing carbon output when residents are required to own a car to get around becomes an impossible task.

B. Maggi Wetland Application Update

The Town Planner discussed the Maggi application. The owner met in January with the TDRB following the three CC meetings of 2015. The TDRB continued the application to ask for more details and an engineer's confirmation of stormwater flow and the associated capacity of the proposed rain garden. The application will be heard again by the TDRB on February 23. An updated site plan was shown with rain garden location and the plus/minus notations of proposed elevation changes.

C. Town Zoning Rewrite

The Town Planner distributed a list of proposed amendments that are being worked on by the Planning Commission. The discussion was restricted to amendments that relate to the actions of the Conservation Commission.

The word "riparian" is not defined in the current regulations. A definition was taken from an Agency of Natural Resources document on public forests and massaged to meet the needs of the regulations.

Mr. Alessi asked why the flood component of riparian elements wasn't mentioned.

Ms. Kozara stated the Connecticut River Joint Commission should have a good definition.

The Town Planner then discussed the proposed changes to Ponds and Pools. All reference to pools was removed. The section added a requirement for a 2' freeboard, the area above the water surface that would allow for stormwater containment.

Mr. Alessi noted small ponds such as those used for private gardens should be exempt. As an example, his garden pond has a 20' diameter with a capacity of 4,000 cubic feet.

A totally new section was written to comply with State mandates on solar screening which require it to be treated the same as any commercial screening. The section stresses compatibility with surrounding areas, a review by the TDRB, multi specie trees, and requirements that screening be immediately effective and maintained forever. This particular section has not yet been reviewed by the PC.

Another new section is to screen generators, heat pumps and ground mounted AC units. These three items are becoming very common. The proposed regulation would exclude them from front yards, require setback compliance and establish a noise level limit of 55 db.

In Article 600 Stormwater, a reference to the State's 2015 GSI Siting Tool brochure is made. The guide is 63 pages long but has great information on rain gardens and low impact water retainment systems.

The Town Planner is creating a "digital library" which would be available on the Town's website. There are many useful publications which are now downloadable in an electronic form. Creating a digital library will allow the Town to make these documents accessible to the general public and board members alike.

A new State model bylaw which merges Flood Hazard regulations with River Corridor standards was released by the Agency of Natural Resources last December. The Town Planner copied out the pertinent River Corridor sections which include the standards and a page of definitions.

D. Snow Dump State Wetland Application

The Town' application to the State Agency of Natural Resources for a wetland review of the proposed snow dump off of Bailey's Meadow was reviewed. The wetland is a rare hill side seep. Normally wetlands are located in flat areas where water accumulates over time.

The Town's original thought was to dump snow over the edge of the bank. A wetland delineation indicated the bank to be a wetland. The Town now wishes to use the buffer area to store snow. The height of the snow pile would be limited to three feet tall. As snow melts, the water would flow west away from the wetland. The river is +/-650' west of the wetland.

The CC reviewed a map of the project site. Once the Town has State approval an application will be made to the TDRB and CC for the local permit process. This would probably take place early summer, late spring.

E. New Member Interview

Lina Hristova introduced herself to the CC as an applicant for the existing vacancy. She and her husband bought and renovated an old farm on Hartland Hill Road three years ago. She has a strong interest in environmental matters and wishes to contribute her services to

the community. The brook that runs through her property has a restored riparian area with additional shrubs and trees. Bee hives and a large garden have been established. She works for a Boston water management company that does civil engineering and water treatment. Project management is her strength. She feels very lucky to live in Woodstock and wishes to work with the community to keep it a great place to live.

After discussion, Mr. Alessi motioned with a second by Mr. Peterson to recommend to the Select Board that Ms. Hristova become a member of the CC. The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS - None

V. NEXT MEETING

The Town Planner will not be present for the March 16, 2016 meeting. There are no active applications at the moment. The CC agreed to hold off the next meeting until April 20, 2016.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Submitted by:

Michael Brands, AICP
Town Planner