

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
March 21, 2018**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Alessi, Lynn Peterson, Bethany Powers, Cyndy Kozara
MEMBERS ABSENT: Byron Quinn, Bo Gibbs, Lea Kachadorian
OTHERS PRESENT: Howard Klum, Michael Brands

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Vice Chair Alessi opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

II. MINUTES

The February 21, 2018 minutes were approved as submitted.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Roadside Invasives Workshop

Mr. Alessi presented an update on the planned Roadside Invasive Workshop scheduled for April 18.

Mr. Alessi read a draft of an announcement that would be published in area newspapers and on local social media sites. The draft was approved by the members. A copy will be emailed for distribution.

Mr. Alessi asked if a Town employee could be present, the Highway Superintendent or Town Manager would be preferable. He also asked if a TRORC staff person could be present to go over regional policies.

The Town Planner noted he has confirmed Mike Bald as the main presenter. Mike is well known throughout the State. This became very apparent when the Town Planner spoke to various State officials for recommended speakers. Mr. Bald essentially started his career with Woodstock in removing a strong infestation of Giant Hogweed from a Gabert Road property. He is now in demand throughout New England.

The Town Planner read an email from Elizabeth Spinney, Invasive Plant Coordinator at ANR. She attempted to contact the State Transportation Agency without success. A new highway policy was recently implemented to reduce the roadside spread of invasives. The main effort is to cut the plants before they seed out. Cleaning mowing machines was another big item. The Town Planner will ask Rita Seto, TRORC Transportation Planner, for a copy of the policy for discussion purposes.

The ANR has a website dedicated to the subject, "Vtinvasives.org". The site has numerous photographs and background material on the various plants considered to be invasive.

Mr. Alessi asked that the Hartford CC article on invasives be copied for distribution at the event.

The Town Planner contacted Sue Greenall, ONRCD. She will attach the draft announcement to her listserve. The following organizations will be contacted: AVCC - a State wide CC organization, the Upper Valley Conservation Commission, Norman Williams Public Library, VINS, Change the World Kids, Woodstock Forum, Upper Valley Forum, Vermont Center for Ecological Studies and any other media group with ties to the area.

Mr. Alessi envisioned the following agenda: introduction, presentation by the specialists, discussion of presentations and a discussion of possible 5 and 10 year goals. Food and drinks should be supplied.

Mr. Alessi and the Town Planner will work together to get out the announcements. The Town Planner is on vacation April 1-16. The P&Z assistant has taken a new job and will end employment on April 5. Mr. Alessi will be the contact person from that point on.

B. Sequestered Carbon via Forestry

Mr. Peterson gave a quick update on the continuing education series concerning Sequestered Carbon. There have been three sessions thus far. Each has increased participation with the last two events exceeding 40 persons. The three events were held at the Forestry Building on the Marsh Billings Rockefeller NPS.

Last Saturday, a State employee presented a session on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Vermont is one of nine states involved. The program has been in effect for nine years. Virginia and New Jersey are about to join to make it an eleven state endeavor.

In 2017, Vermont received \$2.5 from carbon reduction programs. Utility companies and power plants pay into a revolving fund whereby they pay for carbon sequestration. The fund is based on annual regulatory fees and when new plants are brought on-line. The intent is to store carbon in a safe place. What could be safer than a tree?

There is no federal program or federal support for carbon sequestration. California started the program 14 years ago leading up to today's success. California is now working with Ontario to set up a similar program. England has a program to plant trees whereby schools and various social groups are paid for each tree they plant. China is also getting involved and its citizens have planted over a billion trees thus far.

The next series is scheduled for April 21 to take place at the King Farm.

C. High Meadows Update

The Town Planner read an email from Michael Storace, TRORC planner, concerning the High Meadows grant program. Both he and Sue Greenall gave a presentation on water testing to the Woodstock Rotary earlier today. The talk discussed the test results taken from the Kedron Brook last fall. Water samples from side streams as well as the Kedron were sent to the State to test for e. coli bacteria. The results will be forwarded to the Town Planner and CC soon. A list stream table events is being planned for this spring and early summer. Should the CC wish to conduct an event, please contact Mr. Storace.

IV. ACT 171 FOREST FRAGMENTATION VIDEO

The Town Planner projected a Utube video on the State's ANR presentation concerning a recently passed Act 171 Forest Fragmentation mandate. As of January 1, 2018, all new or amended Town Plans will be required to undertake a study of their forests. A forestry map, discussion of forest and proposed goals for achieving wildlife connectivity will be required.

The main portion of the 1.5 hour video dealt with the writing of the proposed town plan language. At the nine minute mark, Jens Hilke, ANR biologist, presented a how-to map scenario based on the BioFinder mapping program, <http://anr.vermont.gov/maps/biofinder>.

Mr. Hilkes presentation was very well executed. He started with a 60-year study in the Town of Stowe showing the reduction of forest mass. This reduction makes it very difficult for wildlife to interconnect with their species, thus leading to inbreeding. With global warming species also tend to move to a more appropriate climate zone as their region warms up. A map showed the migration pattern of the northeast US and eastern Canada. Vermont, with its massive forests along the spine and Northeast Kingdom and the Champlain valley riparian protections, has great attributes for wildlife migration. It is considered a major cross roads in the overall picture as animals can go north, southeast or west.

A revealing section shows the annual travel pattern of a bobcat. The animal used a fairly narrow hedgerow to travel between large forest blocks allowing him to migrate unseen and protected. Riparian waterways are extremely important to wildlife migration. Thus, the retention of riparian vegetation becomes a matter of survival for wildlife. In Woodstock, this means a 50' to a 100' of vegetative cover on one side of a stream or other water body are very important. Wetlands and vernal pools have a 100' buffer.

To watch the video go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nwe98OS33tQ>.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2018.

Ms. Gibbs and Ms. Powers will not be present for the April meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town Planner