



*Woodstock, Vermont*    *The Shire Town of Windsor County*

*TOWN - VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT*

Town Hall • P.O. Box 488 • Woodstock, Vermont 05091 • 802/457-3456

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
October 17, 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Byron Quinn, Al Alessi, Bethany Powers Lynn Peterson, Cyndy Kozara, Howard Krum  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bo Gibbs  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jessica Richter, Michael Brands

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**II. MINUTES**

The September 19, 2018 minutes were approved as submitted.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Presentation - Our Ottauquechee  
- Water Quality Testing Results - by Jess Richter, Planner TRORC**

Ms. Richter, TRORC Planner, presented a power point program on water testing results taken from the Ottauquechee River and the Kedron Brook. TRORC received a grant from the High Meadows Fund, to do an 18 month program on water quality.

The presentation started with a map of the entire Ottauquechee River Watershed which starts in Killington and ends at the Connecticut River in Hartland. The Kedron Brook is a major tributary of the river. Ms. Richter concentrated on information from Woodstock, although the watershed passes through the towns of Killington, Bridgewater, Woodstock, Hartford and Hartland.

The grant has many functions, the main being to increase the visibility and accessibility of the watershed. Preventing future damage from storm events, maintaining clean water, and sharing resources among the underlying towns are additional goals.

TRORC worked with the Ottauquechee Natural Resource Conservation District (ONRCD) and Shelburne Farms. Larry Kasden, Bridgewater resident, operated a water display table which worked well to show the varying degrees of different flood situations for ONRCD. The table was used at six different events this year, mainly with school groups.



Shelburne Farms helped with class room presentations. The National Park Service forest classroom is an example. Numerous presentations with TRORC GIS Planner Pete Fellows were conducted. They helped the TRORC planners set up programs for instructing WUHSMS students to conduct water quality testing programs.

Water testing in the Ottauquechee River started in 2010, with 9 sites (5 on the river and 4 on the tributaries) having been tested annually for the past 8 years. Now 20 sites are tested along the Ottauquechee River in Woodstock. A map of the test sites was shown. Testing sites in some cases are chosen to bracket a known or potential pollution site by testing upstream and downstream of the site.

A very interesting slide of E.coli data ranging from 4 different years was shown. The earliest and highest numbers were found in 1956. Data from 1961, 1970 and 2017 show a diminishing of E.coli over the years. The data is shown in a parts per million (ppm) of E.coli per milliliter of water. The State standard for a healthy system is 235 ppm. In 1956 the readings were 150,000 ppm. By 2017, this had dropped to 235 ppm.

It was noted that rain events will cause E.coli levels to spike. Certain test periods include a note on rain event information when it may impact the testing data.

The Town Planner noted that in the 1950s and 1960s, septic system placement was not regulated. There were numerous examples of "straight pipe" systems where sewage is dumped directly into a water body. The numbers of ppm drop substantially in the more recent years.

Another graph showed E.coli data from 11 sites conducted between 2010 to 2017. The 2018 results are not yet finalized due to quality control requirements. The sample time is between June and September. Data was not taken during or after Tropical Storm Irene.

A meeting is scheduled for November to discuss the data with Sustainable Woodstock and the ONRCD volunteers. Numerous volunteers are required to sustain the project.

A question was raised asking if the Town does testing around its sewer plants. The Town Planner will ask the Sewer Plant employees.

Phosphorous testing was also conducted. Spikes, in relation to the annual average, in the phosphorous data were noted in the 2018 testing at site KB 045, this is near the South Woodstock sewer plant.

Salt pollution was discussed briefly. A notable salt spike is seen in the Roaring Brook site located in Killington.

Chair Quinn stated there are 7 tons of salt applied to Route 4 in Killington, the highest amount in the State.

Ms. Richter wrapped up with a call for new volunteers to continue the process. The 18 month grant period is now over and it's now time for the local residents to step up. It would be great to set up a local watershed group similar to that of the White River Watershed group located north of the Ottauquechee watershed.

Mr. Alessi suggested the CC meet with other watershed towns to work out future goals.

**B. Review Goals for Future Activities**

The Town Planner noted the CC should look into potential subjects for discussion at future meetings. What topics would the CC like to review?

Mr. Krum, as a new member, asked what he should read.

The Town Planner stated the 44 page Natural Elements section of the Town Plan is written specifically for the Conservation Commission. The action program at the end of the section has numerous suggested activities.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Sequestered Carbon**

Mr. Peterson distributed a list of ten points that serves as a summary of the Carbon Sequestration Meetings held over the past year. Each item was reviewed and discussed.

A minimum of 1000 acres is required to have a viable program. The land does not need to be contingent, but could be numerous parcels spread throughout the community.

State or private land is eligible. However, federally controlled land such as the NPS is not eligible.

There are two programs, "cap and trade" and "market" based systems for financial investment.

"Additivity" is a major requirement as well. This means other forest activities need to work alongside the carbon storage function.

Each 1000 acre site requires 200 1/4 acre sites to monitor the effectiveness of the carbon storage system.

Bill Keeton, a UVM professor with a soon to be released book on the subject, calculated that \$1,000,000 could be made per site over a 10 year period.

Vermont has one authorized site enrolled at Burnt Mountain. This is operated by the Nature Conservancy.

There are 300 sequestration programs recognized in the US.

Multi species strategies have been proposed.

Mr. Peterson is attempting to contact State forest officials to see if the Coolidge Forest, abutting his property, is eligible as a carbon sequestration site. The site is well over 1000 acres, meeting the first step. As a State owned parcel it should meet a second step.

Chair Quinn asked why California is allowed to buy forest rights in the Northeast which then allows California companies the right to create more pollution.

The Town Planner felt this is similar to Massachusetts utilities buying alternative energy that is produced in Vermont.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. EE River Loop Trail**

Mr. Alessi asked the CC to review the proposed East End River Loop trail. The Economic Development Committee has submitted a \$22,000 Vermont Planning Grant to redesign the 2000 trail proposal. The system would serve mainly pedestrians. There would be family biking allowed but no mountain or road bikes.

The +/- 3 mile trail had been originally designed back in 2000 by Landscape Architect Robert White. The trail starts at the East End Park and goes east along the river with a return loop down the old railroad bed which eventually becomes Maxham Meadow Way.

Mr. Alessi asked if the CC had any concerns with the trail system as a good portion of it would be built within the 100' riparian buffer. The trails would have a hard pack surface. Exact width is not yet determined and would be known after the redesign is completed.

Should the trail go directly along the river edge, or come inland to avoid riparian vegetation?

Mr. Krum asked if kiosks would be placed that might present biological information or directions to users.

The exact trail location is not finalized, but for the most part would follow 2000 Riverwalk plan. The Town Planner will scan the 2000 map so members may visit the site.

Ms. Kozara was concerned with additional human traffic on a natural wild area. The wildlife needs to be protected. During peak tourist times the trail could be over used.

Maintenance was noted as an additional issue. Who would maintain the trail, pick up trash, fix eroded or washed out sections?

Would the trails be used in the winter?

Snow shoes and XC skiing would be encouraged. Snow mobile and other motorized vehicles would be prohibited.

The Town Planner noted the grant is awarded in December with design work starting in the spring. The CC has time to think and discuss potential impacts at future meetings.

**V. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2018.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Michael Brands, AICP  
Town Planner