CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
January 16, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Byron Quinn, Al Alessi, Bethany Powers, Bo Gibbs, Lynn Peterson, Cyndy Kozara, Howard Krum
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Caduto, Michael Brands

I. OPENING OF MEETING

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

II. MINUTES

The October 17, 2018 minutes were approved as submitted.

III. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. T-4878-18 Paul and Dionne Palandjian

Request Conditional Use approval to excavate area in excess of 5,000 sf for creation of new field. Land is located at 1959 Cox District Road and is zoned Residential Five Acre.

Due to excavation proposed within the 50' riparian buffer zone, the CC is required to review the potential impact on the stream and buffer.

There was no one present to submit the application, therefore the hearing was continued to the February 20, 2019 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Climate Change Resiliency

Mr. Krum presented a brief review of the December Climate Change Resiliency workshop held at the VINS site in Quechee. Numerous other organizations sponsored the event. The Nature Conservancy was the most prominent. The event was well attended.

The workshop was based on new computer applications that are able to crunch data sets to set priorities for the future as climate change impacts the natural world. Climate change is a given in the modeling, therefore how does one deal with the results.

Wildlife animals are not static and will move to compensate for temperature or weather related changes. This concept is well documented via the global scale corridors which extend from the Appalachian mountains through the Catskills, Adirondacks and Green Mountains thru Quebec to Novia Scotia and other northern areas.

What is not as well known is the fact that plants also migrate to compensate for temperature and weather patterns. Certain tree and shrub species have moved north over the years as the climate warms.

Its impossible to save every species, but the intent is to salvage what we can. The best bet is to maximize ones diversity with maximum available habitats. By studying geology changes with elevation inputs one can find the micro climates that specific species desire/need. Connecting these micro climates/areas leads to connectivity. Connectivity functions locally as a corridor. One hundred meters (300') is an internationally known measurement for buffers from human activity whereby wildlife can thrive.

The computer programs crunch the large data sets to help communities focus on certain areas, species and micro climates that may be worth saving for the distant future.

Chair Quinn noted possums were extremely rare before the 1970s, but now are common sites having migrated from more southern/warmer areas.

Mr. Krum noted he has additional information to share should members desire.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Carbon Sequestration

Mr. Peterson presented a short update on the December Carbon Sequestration workshop.

A meeting was held at Mr. Peterson's house on Curtis Hollow Road. The Commissioner of ForestryTim Horton was present. Michael Caduto, Sustainable Woodstock, was also present.

The Commissioner is open to the concept of carbon sequestration. He discussed the normal forest practices and now they might relate to carbon sequestration. The two goals should work well together. Young trees during their growth cycles absorb carbon. Older trees when fully mature act as carbon storage. Therefore each forest area should respect the old growth habitats as they are key to long term carbon storage.

Mr. Peterson mentioned a Chinese article that addresses carbon sequestration. It discusses one of the few test cases in the world on the subject. The test involved a 100 acre site with data measured over an 8 year period. Four quadrants were established to test various methods. Areas planted with a diverse tree species had better results than the mono specie parcels. Trees grew at faster rate thereby increasing their capacity to store carbon.

Carbon is stored in the tree tissue, therefore both roots and trunks are important storage components. Using wood in quality built long lasting furniture is a great method to prolong carbon storage after a tree is cut. Burning wood releases the carbon immediately.

The workshop also determined that carbon storage and current use can work hand in hand. Proper forest management is a key element of current use. A change in current methods would be to allow for more old growth forest areas.

It was noted that hard wood stores more carbon than soft wood and that hickory has one of the highest capacities. Hickory has more BTUs per volume than an equal amount of anthracite coal.

The Nature Conservancy has a carbon storage site in the Northeast Kingdom.

Maine has a number of storage sites. A California company is actually using the Maine forest as a carbon offset investment.

The CC agreed Carbon assets should benefit the home state and not a distant state.

Mr. Caduto noted carbon storage will create jobs as well. Carbon forest management practices would create a more diverse forest.

Mr. Peterson invited members to attend an upcoming carbon action group to take place at the Simons building on Monday January 21.

B. Garbage Island Discussion

KC gave a brief Plastic Island is available on downloadable video

film was good but with rough language for no reason

SW film series has had 700 people attend the first three films

Lobster War between Canada and US due to warming waters relocating lobsters,

VT's carbon use has increased recently, due to home weatherization is needed and transportation

Boston Globe David Able article about carbon and VT mainly based on Woodstock

Plastic bag

Brattleboro ordinance

tp showed Wilmington 12/18/18

Sust. W is working on this

Change the World Kids support the ban, and have their own bag design

voluntary campaign may work

survey monkey of all towns was done, only one business was against

SW bags could be sponsored EDC did not support

will pass on to the Selectboard and PC

plastic recycling discussed at length

MC liked to do a voluntary use

Change the World kids could make a presentation at the Town Meeting, MC will contact them

oceans generate 80% of oxigen

C. Town Plan Update - Forestry/Wildlife Corridors

The Town Planner showed the CC a map of Woodstock which include a portion of neighboring towns to our north, north and west. The map was produced by Pete Fellows, TRORC and contained the proposed wildlife corridor area in Woodstock's south west corner.

The Planning Commission has completed it's rewrite of the Town Plan Energy Chapter, a requirement for municipal involvement in PSB reviews of solar farms and other large scale alternative energy projects. Before the new Energy Chapter may be approved, recently passed legislative mandates require additional work on the Town Plan. One of the mandates is a discussion of parcelization of large forest areas and the related wildlife corridor concepts.

The map shows the heavy forest cover of the Town. In the early 1990s the Town adopted a 28 acre Forest Reserve zone that meshes well with the State's Current Use program which requires a minimum of 25 acres and a two acre homesite. Three major districts were established, two of which work well as wildlife corridors the 200 acre Appalachian Trail area and the 30,000 acre southwest area. The middle National Park/King Farm area contains 900 acres.

The Town Planner has created a one page rough draft for inclusion in the Natural Elements section of the Town Plan. This will be sent around for comment once completed. The PC would then review for final inclusion in the Town Plan

V. OTHER BUSINESS None

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2019.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town Planner