

Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission Meeting

September 12, 2023

Minutes Approved

Members present: Don Dewees, Barry Estabrook, Amy Dohner, Joe Nelson, Karen Pettersen, Matt Gorton (via phone)

Members absent: Craig Heindel, Jen Cirillo

1. Amy opened the meeting at 7:09 p.m.
2. The June 13, 2023 minutes were accepted as presented.
3. Town Forest
 - a. Vermont Master Naturalist. We will ask Craig for any updates from the Vermont Master Naturalist group. Karen expressed concern that updates from them might contain information about the location of rare or endangered plant species. She recommended that any updates be reviewed by the Commission before being made public.
 - b. Boundary walk. Amy will send out a sign-up sheet to see who might be available to do a walk on either October 28 or November 4. Joe felt that forming two groups to do the walk would be ideal, each covering a different section.
 - c. Discussion of the 2023-08-26 botanical foray postponed until the Commission's October meeting.
 - d. Management Plan. No new developments to report. Amy said that the Commission should discuss steps that need to be taken to develop a new Plan during the October meeting and that we should read the existing Plan in advance in order to be prepared. She suggested that the existing Plan should serve as a starting

- point for the updated Plan. Don said that we should examine the objectives of the current Plan to see which ones apply to the future Plan. Joe said that the new Plan should address the snowmobile trail, invasive plants, and other potential trails in the Forest, but he couldn't see the Commission doing active management of the Forest.
- e. 2023 Amphibian Survey. Matt reported that he has submitted the vernal pool survey to the state and he will send the survey to Commission members once he has heard back from the state. He also said that there is the potential for a biologist to survey vernal pools in the Town Forest for possible amphibian diseases.
4. UVM NR4060 project. Joe said that the students would be working on examining Forest Blocks in town in view of Act 171 which requires Forest Blocks to be accounted for in the Town Plan. There are eight students in the class. Joe, Don, and Jens Hilke (Conservation Planner at Vermont Fish and Wildlife) met with the group, which will prepare a proposal for the Commission and submit it by October 1. Don said that Jean Richardson of the Planning Commission will be meeting with the students on October 3. Amy said Commission should nail down a date for when the students will make a presentation to us.
 5. Shade Tree Preservation Plan. Joe said that the Select Board had agreed to create a plan, and that he is the chair of the group that will create one. He will begin recruiting members in October.
 6. 2023-09-09 Bridget Butler Bird Walk. It was reportedly a great success with 15 participants—the maximum that could be accommodated.
 7. We discussed final preparations for the September 22 talk by State Climatologist Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux.

8. New Business

- a. Town Forest. Amy said we should determine whether we should have a sign-in sheet at the beginning of the entry trail and also whether there should be signage indicating sensitive areas that should be avoided such as denning areas for bobcats. She also suggested we discuss ways to work with the Trails Committee.
- b. Amy suggested that we book Bridgett Butler now for an outing next spring.

9. Meeting Adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

10. Next meeting October 10, 2023. Hybrid mode.

Submitted by Barry Estabrook.