

Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission Meeting

June 11, 2024

Minutes Approved

Members present in person: Craig Heindel, Barry Estabrook, Don Dewees, Joe Nelson, Amy Dohner.

Remote: Jen Cirillo

Members Absent: Matt Gorton.

Other attendees: none.

1. Craig opened the meeting at 7:09 p.m.
2. Draft minutes of 2024-05-14 were read and approved as presented.
3. Treasurer's Report: Craig reported that there was over \$1,000 on hand. In addition, Fiscal Year 2025's budget for the CC of \$550 is expected to be available as of July 1. Amy said that Bridget Butler's invoice totaled \$300, and that she had processed it with the town treasurer.
4. Town Forest:

- a. Workday. Jen has sent out the surveys for sign-up. We agreed that we would do it on Sunday, August 11 at 9:00 AM, meeting at the corner of Robinson Road. Work would continue until 3:00. Barry said that the Trails Committee was interested in taking part. He will inform them of the details. Don will go out in advance to see if there are any blow-downs that will require a chainsaw to clear or whether a weed-whacker with a blade will be required. Craig recommended two workdays, one to clear the trail, to install signs on it, and also to mark the boundaries. The other workday would deal with invasive plants. Joe said it would be best to do that in the fall.
- b. Joe said the Nature Conservancy offered to give a training session for Commission members on invasive species control--probably in September.
- c. Don said that he will design and build a small, roofed-kiosk to be placed at the Robinson Road pull-off. The kiosk will have a map and also laminated sheets or inexpensive plastic signs with basic information, requests to keep dogs leashed, and to stay on the trail where it passes through private property. Don and Joe will design a mock-up of the kiosk. Don will ask John Bull of the town Highway Department if they can provide a sign[s] identifying the Schultz-Aldrich driveway. He will consult with Schultz-Aldrich about wording for the sign. Don will report to the Commission with cost estimates for the kiosk, and whether the town will absorb costs for other signage. When more details are developed about the signs, Craig will check with Kinkos about their options for weather-resistant materials for any signs the Commission supplies.
- d. Management Plan: Joe asked whether we would be interested in having the students in the UVM Field Naturalist Graduate Program prepare the management plan. Jen said she had been

in touch with Walter Poleman, Program Director, who said that he was interested, but that we should move rapidly.

5. Leopold Benches: Jen said that the workshop to build the benches would be Thursday, October 3 at 8:00 AM at Rokeby and would include a bird walk and banding in the morning followed by lunch. The CC will help publicize the event.

6. CC's web page on town website: Amy reported she had been in touch with Betsy Etchells and would send her changes to be incorporated. Barry confirmed that he is managing a database of reports of wildlife sightings from town residents.

7. June 2, 2024 Slow Birding with Bridget Butler: Joe reported that the morning went well. The weather was good, and there were 11 attendees; feedback from them was positive.

8. Shade Tree Preservation Plan:
 - a. Plantings: Joe reported that all nine trees that were affordable by the recent grant have been planted—at the school, the Atkins development, the Town Beach and the town hall.
 - b. Plan: Joe reported that the committee is making good progress on their draft plan. He hopes to present it to the Select Board this fall.

9. Possible Agricultural Water-Quality Presentation: Jen said she had not heard back from her contact at Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition. She will follow up.

10. Bat Monitoring: Amy reported that the Commission will have to take care of organizing bat monitoring in town this summer, because Alyssa Bennett, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife small mammal biologist, no longer has the staff to handle it. It will take place between over four nights between July 11 and July 30. The sites will be Kingsland Bay State Park, Janice Perry's house, North Ferrisburgh's Ruddy Mill, and Rokeby. Craig will contact Janice Perry and the owners of Ruddy, Amy will check with Rokeby, and Jen and Amy will co-coordinate on Kingsland Bay.

11. New Business:
 - a. Joe suggested that Bobolink conservation might make a good focus for a presentation, and/or possible collaboration on a project that the CC could participate in. Jen said that Kevin Tolan at Vermont Center for Ecostudies would be a good source; Joe offered to contact him.

 - b. Joe noted that we should pursue finding new members to the Commission. Craig noted that we have room for 2 more members [we have 7 now; legislation allows up to 9]. He will coordinate with the town clerk's office about posting the open positions early in the fall, when our monthly meetings start up again.

Meeting Adjourned 8:55 PM

Next Meeting September 10, 2024 at the Town Hall and via Zoom.