

**Conservation Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2017**

Present: Cedric Alexander, Ken Denton, Gary Gulka, Chuck Marian, Chris Duff, Dawn Andrews, Seth O'Brien

Next Meeting: **February 12, 2017, 7:00 PM**

Agenda approved with no changes.

Minutes of September 11 approved with no changes.

Public Comment

Dawn Andrews mentioned Vermont Coverts and no-cost forest stewardship workshops such as A Walk in the Woods. There was interest in scheduling a workshop in April or May. Dawn mentioned that game cameras are an excellent tool to engage communities and youth in wildlife education. She suggested that we consider acquiring a few of these.

Winooski Headwaters Project

Seth O'Brien was invited to the meeting to discuss the possibility of doing drone photography work of the Winooski River through his company, Green Mountain Drone. This goal of this project would be to provide a unique and detailed perspective of various segments of the river as part of an effort to build public awareness and appreciation of the river as a public resource. Given that most of the river borders on private land, there is not much opportunity to actually see the river, let alone access it. The Conservation Committee could also use the photography to observe the extent of riparian buffers, floodplains and other features. The Committee unanimously voted to provide \$200 in funding to initiate the project. Further details and work will be defined at the next meeting in February.

Sawmill Dam Removal

At the present time a Phase I assessment of the Sawmill Dam property is underway to identify the presence of any hazardous materials on the site from previous activities. There is the possibility that dam removal work could begin in the next year or two.

Status of Molly's Fall's Pond State Park

Ken Denton and Gary Gulka gave an update on the status of the State Park, after attending a Planning Commission meeting on December 7. At this meeting, Susan Bulmer of the Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) indicated that any development of the Park will occur over several years and at this

stage there are no plans to make any significant changes in the coming year. Areas of the reservoir shore suitable as day use sites have been identified, primarily along Old Route 2, as areas that have historically been used for that purpose. Other areas have been identified as potential primitive camp sites, accessible by boat that could be fee for use sites in the future. FPR would need to develop composting toilets for these areas and possibly tent platforms. Use of the park is being monitored by park staff. There is no day use fee. Although the State will not have to comply with town zoning regulations for park development, it is policy of the State to do so, and further discussions will be occurring with the Planning Commission. There will be another meeting scheduled for December 2018 to give town officials a status update.

Review of annual meeting of Association of VT Conservation Commissions

Gary provided an update of the annual meeting attended in September. He described the strategic planning process developed for Conservation Commissions and the community values mapping process that communities have used to engage residents in identifying important natural resources and favorite recreation sites. After discussion, it was agreed that the Planning Commission should undertake the strategic planning process this spring with a facilitator to identify the priority projects and actions it should be working on. Gary will email the strategic planning process PowerPoint presentation and the spreadsheets used to identify priority actions. He will also contact Lori Augustyniak about facilitation of the strategic planning meetings.

Conservation Speaker Series:

We will mostly put this on hold until we undertake the strategic planning process.

Review draft annual report for Town Report

A draft of the Conservation Committee annual report for the Town Report was reviewed and approved with the one addition of the strategic planning process to be undertaken.

Budget Status and 2018 Budget Request

There is about \$296 remaining in the Conservation Committee budget. It was agreed that the remainder of the budget will be spent as follows: \$200 for initiation of drone photography of the Winooski River with Green Mountain Drone and the remainder to purchase conservation resource documents.

With the change in the fiscal year calendar, there is a January 1 - June 30, 2018 budget for the Conservation Committee of \$500. This budget has already been approved. Gary indicated that this amount of funding is not adequate to even cover Green Up Day expenses that will be incurred in May 2018, let alone allow us to have any other expenditures between January 1 and June 30, 2018. Gary will

raise this issue with the Select Board and the fact that Green Up day expenses had always been part of the Select Board's budget until a few years ago.

The Conservation Committee agreed to request the following budget for FY 2019 which runs from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

FY 2019 Conservation Committee Budget Request (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019)

Green Up Day Expenses (Trash collection, Disposal, Advertising)	\$625.00
Conferences	100.00
Conservation Speaker Series (3 speaker fees @ \$125 each)	375.00
Memberships (Assoc of VT Conservation Districts)	50.00
Publications (purchase of reference documents, maps)	100.00
Special Projects	250.00
Total	\$1500.00

Submitted by Gary Gulka 12/22/17