

TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO
CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
January 28, 2020

Conservation Commission Members: Drew Adam, Erin Rodgers, Laurie Callahan, and Jesse Wagner

Absent: Marilyn Chiarello

Staff: Sue Fillion, Andrew Graminski

A. Call to Order

D. Adam called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m.

B. Announcements

A. Graminski made an announcement that there is an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness meeting in Newfane on 1/29/2020 at 4:30. Meeting will be held at the Newfane fire house.

C. Approve Minutes of December 10, 2019

L. Callahan made a motion to approve the December 10, 2019. Motion was seconded by J. Wagner.

D. New Business

1. AVCC Grant – Update on available funds

S. Fillion gave an update on the amount of funds there are left over through the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissioners (AVCC) grant. There is \$526.91 left to use. The grant was given for invasive plant management and removal projects. S. Fillion discussed an idea to use the funds to help put together a tool trade program that would be run with the Town's new Sustainability Coordinator. The program is still in the making but it will be run out of the library and Brattleboro time trade.

Commission also discussed using the funds to hire a speaker to do a spring backyard management event, funds could be used as a stipend for the speaker, if the commission decided to go that route. Discussion also focused using the funds to potentially get a guide on invasive removal for the public, along with updating materials at kiosks at various parks in Brattleboro regarding invasive species. Funds should be spent by May.

2. Spring Soils Event

A. Graminski made an update that commissioner M. Chiarello had been in communication with the Retreat Farm and conveyed to planning staff that they had mentioned her that a soils event would be better in the summer because of pedestrian traffic and weather. D. Adams brought up an idea of having an Earth Day event at the 250 Birge Street site instead of the retreat. Ideas for the event included the following:

- 1.) Soil tunnel
- 2.) rain fall
- 3.) River Conservancy discusses 250 Birge St project (see item 3 for more details)
- 4.) Invasive plant walk
- 5.) Floodplain discussion centered around the value of floodplain protection/mitigation
- 6.) Edible Brattleboro growing station
- 7.) Invite Vermont Urban & Conservation Forest to event

8.) Backyard ecosystem workshop (maybe with BEEC?)

Commission talked about creating a subgroup to help with planning efforts in February and March. Planning staff will get in touch with stakeholders and coordinate with commissioners about event timeline and updates. If event was held in April around Earth Day, it would be either the weekend before or after.

3. 250 Birge St – Public Outreach

Public outreach will be aimed to get an idea of what the public and neighbors of 250 Birge St want to see the property be once environmental clean-up is complete and floodplain restoration has been finished. Currently, there has been consensus around the idea of the property having passive recreational activities once its fully restored. Planning staff will sketch out an outreach event, possibly more than one.

4. Emerald Ash Borer

Commissioners discussed EAB preparedness in Vermont and J. Wager provided a summary from an EAB preparedness meeting he attended in Londonderry, VT a few weeks back. S. Fillion told commission that a preparedness plan for the Town was created back in 2014 with an inventory of ash trees in the Downtown. Priority Ash trees were identified in downtown Brattleboro. J. Wagner mentioned human intervention spreads EAB faster than EAB moving on its own. The EAB has been identified in Windham County but has not been identified yet in Brattleboro yet. There are three management methods that J. Wagner brought up with the commission:

- 1.) Preemptive: down trees before EAB hits
- 2.) Selective management: Select trees to prioritize and treat with insecticide
- 3.) Delayed management: Waiting till trees are dead

Commissioners made no decisions on how they want to be involved with EAB preparedness, will follow up at later meetings.

E. Old Business

1. Water Quality Issues

a) Whetstone Brook

S. Fillion mentioned previous efforts last year to name the streams that enter into the Whetstone to help identify the value of the Whetstone watershed.

b) Kettle Pond

This pond has been identified as a high priority project site in the Connective River Basin Plan. Commissioners talked about doing a site visit in the spring/ or summer. Staff will coordinate with DPW about potential restoration projects.

c) Creamery Bridge

L. Callahan talked about erosion issues around the bridge and that the commission could potentially do a site visit and take photos of visible erosion that is present.

2. Invasive Phototoxic Plants

Last year, the commission created a video series on removing invasive plants with a past commissioner who also worked with BCTV. Commissions brought up the idea of doing another

video regarding invasive phototoxic plants. Staff will get in touch with the past commissioner who did the previous video to see if they would be interested.

G. Adjourn

Next meeting will be held on February 25, 2020 at 5:15 PM in the Hanna Cosman Room at the Municipal Center.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.