

**Charlotte Conservation Commission
Draft Meeting Minutes
December 4,2018
Charlotte Town Offices
7:00pm**

Members in attendance:

**Amos Baehr, Krista Hoffsis, Derk Bergquist, Linda Radimer,
Mary Van Vleck, and Susan Blood.**

Guest: Frank Tenny, our Selectboard Liason

Please note this meeting was actually our November meeting which was scheduled for November 27th but was postponed due to inclement weather. Also note that the Conservation Commission will not meet on Tuesday, December 25th! Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 22nd.

7:00 - Adjustments to agenda and public comment

7:10 - Approve Oct. Minutes - Motion made and seconded. October minutes were approved.

Conservation Currents update:

Thank you to Krista and Linda for recent articles.

Kevin is up for January and then we will set up a new round of writers.

7:15 - Reports

Town report write-up: The report covers July '17 to July '18. Amos wrote a draft and circulated it. He incorporated edits from members and emailed it to Dean. Thanks to Erika for the picture!

Town plan revisions: Erika and Krista looked through everything in the Town Plan that is relevant to the CCC. Krista realized that there are a number of things in the Town Plan that we are supposed to do that we haven't really been aware of. For instance we are supposed to meet with the Selectboard on an annual basis. Separately, Amos consulted with Dan Cole and Don Stevens about adding more about indigenous peoples to the Town Plan. He wrote a paragraph which will be incorporated into the town plan.

Chittenden County CC gathering: Amos went to a joint gathering of CC's in Winooski. Different CC use different programs at UVM to get feedback and information about issues. It's possible we could get a summer intern (!) or perhaps someone could use Charlotte for a senior thesis. We could even perhaps get help updating the Significant Wildlife Map which is becoming dated.

Ecosystem services quantification - there is a template that we could use for this on the Trust for Public Lands website. Also, Derk heard a great radio show on Saturday about ecosystem services evaluation that included a chat with Bob Costanza. We should all listen to it!

Collaborative empowerment - there are other CC who want to preserve plots of land in their towns but they don't have a land trust. We are lucky to have that resource! Important to remember that we can make recommendations but they are neutral. Also some CC don't really interact with their Planning Commissions. So we are grateful to the people who came before us and established our relationship with the Planning Commission.

Amos was reminded that the Winooski Valley Park District gives grants for projects in our area. We need to remember this!

7:45 - Open space management

Ten Stones - a clustered cohousing community off Greenbush Road. Ten Stones had a forester evaluate the forest and his recommendation is that they should deal with invasives such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. This would require cutting in the No Cut Zone that was specified when Ten Stones was formed. Ten Stones also wants to remove some ash to give room for other trees to grow especially with the impending Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Frank mentioned that invasives management could be a part of future no cut zones. Perhaps as the CC we could make a list of priorities in terms of managing woodlands. A representative from Ten Stones will come to our next meeting to discuss this.

There are 2 categories of no cut zones at Ten Stones- one is for screening, and the other is around a wetland. The Planning Commission is looking for support in terms of how to we enforce Open Space agreements. Once they are agreed to no one really goes back and checks.

Open Space Agreements generally - Marty Illick told Amos that the Planning Commission has old open space agreements which need to be reviewed and that will help inform how new ones are written. One question is how Open Space agreements should be monitored. Should someone look every 5 years? This could be an educational opportunity for the landowner. Marty would like our help with recommendations about how to handle this. Enforcement is not part of our mission but it could be part of the Planning Commissions. Perhaps we need a working group to look at Open Space Agreements and work with Marty? How about a checklist or template for reviewing existing Open Space agreements? Perhaps we could take pictures of a property and that might be helpful in terms of seeing how land changes. Open Space agreements are part of the properties deed.

Ash trees - The tree warden is talking about taking all the Ash trees (355 of them?) out of the right of ways in Charlotte because it is safer to remove trees when they are alive. This issue also came up at the Chittenden County CC meeting. Frank said they were thinking of piling the ash trees at the old flea market field and then people could come get it. Perhaps we could talk with the tree warden? Vermont Edition had a show on the [Emerald Ash Borer](#). If we cut them all down then we have no chance of seeing if one of them might be resistant. Of course, a resistant tree could be somewhere else in Charlotte.

Wetland restoration grants - there is \$ available for wetland restoration grants. Charlotte has lots of wetlands that could use restoration!

8:30 - Connectivity working group

Game cam uploads - Krista removed the cameras that she and Linda set up across the street from Pizza on Earth. The good news is that the battery lasted for a long time and that lots of pictures were taken. Krista reviewed the photos and there was no evidence of wildlife in them. But still, it was a good test!

8:45 - Options for town trail on Clark Hinsdale's land.

We reviewed the options for trail easements from Sheehan Green to the North West. We decided it would be best to actually go look at the options and a subset of our commission agreed to meet Friday at 3pm to walk the land!

9:15 - Adjourned - motion made and seconded. All approved.

Meeting Minutes submitted by Susan Blood.