

Charlotte Conservation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
11/19/13

Present: Joanna, Fritz, Holly, Howard, Mariana, Bob, Gary

Guest: Pam Brangan, CCRPC

Public: Planning Commission and Charlotte Land Trust representatives were present.

### **Habitat Map**

Pam Brangan attended the meeting and demonstrated the Charlotte Significant Wildlife Habitat Map—web interface. She showed how you can create reports, find parcel ID, make pdfs to make printed maps, measure acreage and distance. You can also type in a street address and the map will find it. Parcel lines are updated about once a year (a contractor does them for the town, Dean sends the data to Pam).

Bob gave summary of background of habitat data collection/coordination. Link to User's Guide is on the website. There is also a technical guide that discusses the Seven Principals that were used in constructing the site. Joanna says she can post this on the website.

Discussion of reports for Habitat Polygons and how the amounts/quality of data varies between them. Some are field verified, others only have pretty general information. We need to establish a process where any reports done by consultants can be added to the map, associated with specific parcels, polygons.

Pam will try to do some minor formatting edits that we requested by the end of the year.

Discussion about ranking spots on the map: hotspots where many values overlap? But disconnect between roles of map: natural resource planning vs. subdivision review. Consensus seems to be that we do not want to rank parcels or areas where values are summed up because the relative importance of different habitat values is so subjective. But we did discuss that data such as forest cover ranked by size of contiguous area would be useful. Pam has this data and could provide it. Cons Comm needs to discuss further what additional data we might want as part of the map. We brought up but did not decide on whether we want to Habitat map to maintain it's purpose and have another platform on-line that contains all the other Town GIS data or if we would want to add many more layers to the Habitat map. Needs more discussion.

Also, we will have to address the problem that new data is parcel-linked but the existing database is habitat-polygon-based.

Discussion about getting iNaturalist points on the map: Pam says it won't work, but we should check out Biofinder, nat res atlas...

### **Town Farm Bay**

Bob attended site walk on behalf of Commission with Sue Smith, Alan Quackenbush (DEC) and Laura Lapierre (DEC). Permission to walk Town Line Road LLC and Katherine Arthaud's property was denied via attorneys. So the group walked Williams Woods, the railroad tracks, some VELCO. Bob reports that Alan was unclear about what next steps the Commission might take to help support a reclassification of the area to Class I. Mariana has emailed Alan with specific questions regarding such

and will report back with answers.

## **October minutes approved**

### **Budget**

Joanna showed this year's budget with the budget line-items and a draft of next year's. The current budget is \$4800 with most of that in the category "Education and Tech Support." Other categories are VT Association of Conservation Commission dues and Green-Up Day. Some discussion about changing the line-item categories, but we remembered that (1) Mary doesn't want to change them names/have to open new accounts and (2) it makes more sense to have the all-encompassing "Ed & Tech Support" category since this descriptor covers most of what we would like to do/forsee spending money on.

Discussion about what we can contribute toward town water-quality efforts via LCA (frogbit and water-quality monitoring). Marty has asked for \$2600. We discussed how we strongly support water-quality and invasives removal but these should really be dedicated funds, not taken from the Commission's working budget each year. However, it was deemed untenable that we would receive \$4800-\$5000 for our own budget PLUS \$2600 for LCA at this point. We compromised by deciding to ask for \$5600, given that the Commission's budget has been flat or decreased during the last few years (can Bob provide historical budget numbers?), we want to be able to pay Pam Brangan to continue to refine the Habitat map and perhaps upgrade it with additional data., and we would like to be able to fully fund Marty's request. We noted if we do not get the full amount requested, we would only be able to provide \$2000 to LCA. Some other items we wanted to include in the budget were: money for Commissioner training, possible purchase of a projector (and extension cord!) for use at meetings, printing of a pamphlet to give to landowners who come to town hall to subdivide that provides guidance on the aspects the Conservation Commission examines when providing guidance to the Pcomm.

### **Nature Notes**

Mariana: neighbors chickens prefer the leaf litter and "rough" landscaping of her yard to their own well-manicured lawn. Holly sees buffleheads.