

Charlotte Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes – October 24, 2014

In attendance: Fritz Tegatz, Robert Hyams, Howard Verman, Roel Boumans, Holly Sullivan, Mel Huff, Derk Bergquist

Guests: Amos Baehr

DECISIONS

I. Workplan and Budget

- The commission was notified that the budget should be rebuilt from the ground up
- Bob indicated he has budgets for the frogbit removal project and water sampling, both of which are significant amounts .
- Holly asked whether we need money for tech support for the GIS mapping. Roel responded that the county has support for GIS work and Charlotte is not using that in its entirety currently.
- Howard asked about what we are contributing to the high school education project. A number of commissioners pointed out that the high school is providing everything they need.
- Fritz and Howard had no other items to add.
- Mel would like to see some funds for education and outreach activities to involve the public. Robert explained some of the past CCC activities associated with the Town Party. There was some discussion of having conservation-related presentations. Fritz suggested that the Commission come to the Selectboard if unanticipated needs arise as opportunities are not always known ahead of time. Mel suggested we add \$300 to the budget to cover presentations.
- Mel indicated that the Lewis Creek Alliance asked us to add Wild Parsnip and Garlic Mustard to the Frogbit project. Bob said that we are focusing on subdivision review, but our by-laws indicate we are doing much more than that. He also indicated that the Frogbit project is doing exactly what the CCC should be doing and is very successful. The water sampling is also happening throughout the watershed and is going to be used by the state. Roel asked whether the funds for those projects should be passing through the CCC if the CC has very little involvement. Derk argued that these are the kinds of projects we might be expected to support, but that perhaps the CCC should be letting those in in charge of the projects know our expectations in terms of presentations/reports of results. In the ensuing discussion, “those in charge” is not entirely clear. Bob indicated there were discussions over the summer about that. He then presented the budget for those projects. Mel sees the water sampling project as well within the charge of the CCC but not necessarily the frogbit project. Holly feels the frogbit project is within the CCC purview. She was initially skeptical, but based on the last couple year’s experience she is much more positive about it.
- Roel made a motion to vote on whether water sampling and frogbit projects should be in the CCC budget.
 - Bob wants to include it in the budget.
 - Fritz indicated that if the invasive species committee (Charlotte Invasives Collaborative) is handling invasive species issues in the Town then perhaps frogbit belongs under it. He said we think it should be included this year, but maybe this project needs to move to another committee in coming years.
 - Howard agrees with Fritz.
 - Mel also agrees.

- Derk abstained
- Fritz made a motion that we accept the budget as written. The CCC voted unanimously to accept the budget as written.

II. Review and Appointment of Officers

- Fritz made a motion to confirm Roel Boumans as Chair, Mel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in support.
- Vice-chair: Roel asked for volunteers for this position. There were no volunteers.
- Secretary: Bob made a motion to vote in Derk Bergquist as Secretary, Fritz seconded, and the vote was unanimously in support.
- Treasurer: Discussion of the requirements of the treasurer. Mel nominated Bob, but he declined. Holly indicated she might be willing to serve as treasurer starting in January.

DISCUSSION POINTS

III. Commission Operations

- Meeting frequency
 - Roel suggested we maintain monthly meetings and have additional meetings on an as-needed basis
 - Bob suggested we have a time slot the second Tuesday of each month for voting purposes only as needed. Howard indicated absentee voting may be possible.
 - It was agreed the second Tuesday of each month is used as-needed for voting with 48 hours notice.
- Number of Commissioners
 - The suggestion was made that we reduce the Commission to 7 members so a quorum was easier to achieve.
 - Mel feels it is important to maintain 9 Commissioners and that there should be someone appointed to development to ensure the Commission has all the members it needs. Perhaps having more people involved to provide a pool of potential Commissioners to draw from would be a good way to go
 - It was agreed to leave the number of Commissioners at 9.

IV. Impact Assessment Protocols

- Roel indicated that not everyone is comfortable performing impact assessment.
- Black Rock Development is moving quickly. Mel wants to recuse herself of this project. The CCC looked at the site and felt that it damages a lot of habitat and corridors for wildlife, would change hydrology on the hill and cause the river to be more erratic. The CCC felt this would cause liability for the Town.
- Garner Shoreline Stabilization Project: The state examined the project. The project is less than 100', trees will be replaced, and is above water line. Their neighbors performed a similar stabilization project. Does not look like an objectionable project.
- Sue Morse wildlife training: She performs training on how to identify wildlife using an area. The course consists of six all-day field sessions spread over 6-9 months and an overall commitment of one day a month for one year. Cost is \$7500 for 20 participants (\$375/person). It was suggested that there may be other options such as asking UVM wildlife faculty help us. Further discussion will be carried out at a future meetings

V. Googledrive

- Roel asked if anyone had been able to access the Googledrive
- Those who tried, indicated it worked well.

--It was suggested anyone who adds an item send a notification to the other commissioners

VI. Conservation Currents

--Holly contacted Charlotte News—they have not developed a 2015 schedule yet.

--Holly is taking care of December, but someone is needed for November

--The Commissioners typically go on a rotation. Amos joined the Commission at the table and offered his help for those who do not like to write (willing to edit).

--Bob indicated that Conservation Currents was originally a way to describe what Commission was doing. He suggested we follow the more free-form writing by a blurb about ongoing Commission activities.

--Holly asked for topics:

--Follow-up on CVU project (Mel, February)

--Pollinators or pollinator gardens (Mel, April)

--Wetland article (Bob, June)

--Spring grassland birds (Holly, May)

--When is a species gone? (Roel)

--Water quality (Roel)

--Historic water quality based on EPA (Derk)

--Conversation with an animal (Howard)

Nature Notes:

Howard saw a baby bobcat

Roel saw a hawk attack a pigeon 5 feet from him

Meeting adjourned