

**Town of Londonderry
Conservation Commission**

MINUTES

Thursday, July 18, 2024

Members present: Helen Hamman, Gary Hedman, Jane MacKugler, Irwin Kuperberg, Steve Swinburne, Sunny Wright Visitor: Hayley Kolding, Conservation Manager, Southern Vermont River Conservancy

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:10pm
2. Additions or deletions to the agenda- Discussions of river resources and the Vermont River Conservancy by Hayley Kolding, Conservation Manager, Southern Vermont River Conservancy. Motion to add this agenda item by Jane, seconded by Gary, approved by vote.
3. Approval of June minutes- Motion to approve made by Steve, seconded by Sunny and approved by vote
4. Old Business
 - a. Zoning Bylaw Amendment – The Selectboard voted to not approve the Zoning Bylaw Amendment.
 - b. Williams Dam- Advisory Committee voted to repair the dam, beginning with repair of the gate.
 - c. Pollinator Garden-
 - i. Irwin contacted Mike Kiernan with concerns about the lack of perennial plants such as echinacea and lupine. He sent him current photos of the garden. Mike replied that perennial seeds had been included, that it actually looked good for a second year planting and that “The field will tell you what it wants to be”. Regarding echinacea he said “Best way to get echinacea in there is to plant the forb and walk around hand distributing the seed in the dormant season.” He will come down and do that in September.
 - ii. Based on there being no change to the zoning bylaws we will install the smaller sign approved by the Selectboard last year. Irwin contacted Vermont Sign Works to complete the order placed last year, which was approved by the Selectboard, to build and install the sign.
 - d. Wastewater Project – Gary attended the regularly scheduled Wastewater Committee mtg this week. The engineer is ready to submit the engineering design plan to the state to advance the project for funding. Additional test pitting is needed at Prouty.
 - e. Natural resources inventory- Irwin obtained copies of the Guilford and Warren inventories. Steve contacted Sue Morse from Keeping Track to determine whether they can conduct a study for us. She explained that it requires observation from citizen scientists. We discussed reaching out to our community to recruit interested citizen scientists from our own town. There was discussion of asking people in town to submit their own wildlife sightings. Gary pointed out that the recent forest management plan we commissioned for the town lands will include a large amount of useful information. Hayley mentioned that the state has now made river and wetlands (not included in that report) a priority. Newer regulations are now aimed

at net gain of wetlands. Next step: create an RFP for the project, followed by community engagement with UVM students as a possible resource. They usually pick their projects in November. Gary offered to reach out to UVM for ideas on how to structure the project.

- f. Conservation News
 - i. Following restrictions passed against neonicotinoids in NYS the VT legislature passed a bill to ban in our state but it was vetoed by Governor Scott as being 'anti farmer'. An alternative to pesticides is the practice of Agroecology (the application of ecological concepts and principals in farming).
 - ii. The Velomont Trail is being proposed by Green Mountain National Forest officials as a non-motorized multi-use trail running the length of Vermont. There will be a public hearing at the Manchester Public Library on July 25.
 - iii. The Cemetery Commission has installed an interpretive sign at the Lowell Lake cemetery.
 - iv. Cannibal frogs have become invasive in Florida in Georgia. Among one species of cannibal frogs in Australia the female will eat the male if not satisfied with his song.
 - g. River resources and the Vermont River Conservancy - Kelsey Holdin discussed the role of the Vermont River Conservancy . Their work is now focused on flood resiliency and they can help communities identify portions of the river that can be conserved to increase flood resiliency. We discussed different strategies to engage the VRC in an educational event including a field experience in the form of a river walk.
 - h. Events
 - i. River walk by Kelsey Holdin to discuss the geomorphology of the West River, beginning at the Farmer's Market and ending at the WR Trailhead .
 - ii. Our Vermont Surroundings in 4 Seasons, Climate Change- Jane reached out to Bill McKibben who has not yet replied.
 - iii. Ice Age in Vermont- Helen spoke to geologist Robert Badger who will consider it
 - iv. Bear update- Mark will speak to Ben Killum or Sue Morse or Ryan Smith (Fish & Wildlife)
 - v. Foraging and Cooking Up Edible Plants Kevin Beattie has agreed. Irwin spoke with GNAT and they are willing to allow us to use their studio kitchen. We will approach Wes Genovart about this.
 - vi. Discussion of these possible talks were tabled for later in the year: Future talks: ; Fox, Owl prowl, Slow birding ,Agroecology
 - vii. Idea for the next Winter series.: Early Year Activity of Local Species (bears, foxes, amphibians, insects)
5. New Business
- a. Bruce Frauman had suggested the LCC sponsor a showing of the film Common Ground. He will get a copy for us to review.
6. Wildlife sightings -grey fox, weasel, woodchuck, deer, turkeys; monarch, swallowtail, great spangled, silver spotted skipper butterflies,

Next meeting: August 15