

Town of Bethel, Vermont  
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 5/10/17, 6:30 PM  
Town Office

Meeting brought to order at 6:30pm

Present: Mary Floyd, Lisa Campbell, Mark Heckmann, Katie O'Neill, Emily Miller,  
Vanessa Brown, Jennifer Schomp, Ferron Griffin.

1. Minutes: Minutes from April meeting were reviewed and approved.
2. Jennifer shared information about upcoming 3 upcoming trainings from the North Branch Nature Center on school gardens (5/16, 5/18, 5/25). Emily will share with folks at the school.
3. Discussion about the DRB's meeting on the Dollar General.
4. Vernal pools concern
  - a. A concern was raised about the possibility of people filling in vernal pools.
  - b. Vernal ponds are invaluable to invertebrates, amphibians and others. The CC should be mindful of ways we can get the word out about the important roles these pools play.
  - c. Perhaps the CC should consider an inventory of the vernal pools and wetlands around town.
5. Report on Town Forests subcommittee
  - a. Mary and Mark shared the results of a meeting of the subcommittee
    - i. Comprised of Mary, Mark, Ferron, Mary Anderson, Mark Alexander, Karen Wynkoop, Pat Judge, Danny Dover and Carol Sears.
    - ii. Hiked the Branliere trail.
  - b. Mark recently made and placed a sign noting the start of the Branliere Forest.
  - c. AJ Follensbee is the new Windsor County Forester
    - i. Windsor County has a new Forester in place and he recently briefly spoke with CC members

- ii. AJ is interested in working to develop management plans for the Bethel town forests and the CC would like to get the management plans underway as soon as possible.
    - iii. Ferron will get in touch with him.
  - d. Vanessa Brown shared her thoughts about the Branliere Forest and trail as an adjoining and concerned landowner.
    - i. She is deeply concerned about inviting unwanted attention and activity and feels that the CC has rushed to open up the forest to citizens.
    - ii. She is concerned that there may be rare plants present and that they may be damaged in some way.
    - iii. She is concerned about increased trash and evidence of partying.
    - iv. Vanessa requested that the CC remove the sign until the CC has consulted further with the county forester.
      - 1. Discussion ensued.
      - 2. The CC decided unanimously to leave the sign in place.
  - e. Signage about staying on the trail and a sign to note the end of the trail
    - i. Mark will look into how the subcommittee can put that up.
  - f. The subcommittee may hike in the other town forests as well and will share the word with commission members and Vanessa when they set those dates.
- 6. Grant applications review
  - a. Postponed to June.
- 7. Kiosk display for buyout properties
  - a. The CC had a discussion about what should be displayed. Potential items include:
    - i. History of the property.
    - ii. Map delineating boundaries of the property.
    - iii. Materials from the White River Partnership highlighting tree plantings, river dynamics.
      - 1. Ferron will be in touch with Mary Russ (WRP).
- 8. Other business
  - a. River corridor easement possibilities
    - i. Ferron has been in touch with Mary Russ (WRP).
    - ii. Ferron and Chuck developed a list of locations/landowners along the Third Branch and Upper White River. This may be used to assess interest in conservation easements in the future.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30pm. Next meeting will be Wednesday, 6/14 at 6:30pm at the town office.