

Town of Bethel, Vermont
Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 5/22/24, 6:30 PM
Town Offices

Meeting brought to order at 6:30pm.

Present: Ferron Griffin, Mary Floyd, Chris Fors, Emily Miller, Danny Dover, Lisa Campbell (remote), AJ Follensbee (remote for item #4)

1. Minutes: Minutes from the April meeting were approved as written.
2. Green-up Day:
 - a. ~2 truckloads of trash were collected.
 - b. Cub Scouts and rotary worked at Peavine, Common and Rec Center.
3. VOREC update (from Chris)
 - a. Carla's Meadow trail
 - i. It is built and it is beautiful!
 - ii. We will need to establish a mowing contract for the connector between the ball fields and the field itself.
 - b. ADA sidewalks are connected and complete at the Rec Center.
 - c. Wayfinding Committee is forming and is going well.
 - d. 2.5 mi trail behind the Rec Center/school will start in July and take much of the summer.
4. Quimby Town Forest
 - a. Sayward (Randolph town forest) work recap
 - i. Some of the work included:
 1. Ash tree and EAB remediation
 2. Plantings of seedlings to account for changing climates (hickories, chestnuts, spruce, white pine, yellow birch, maple)
 - ii. 24 acre harvest (~70 acre total) resulted in a fair bit of money for the town (\$19,500).
 - iii. Lots of education around it.
 - iv. Some unavoidable impact on mountain bike trails, but Ridgeline was good to work with.
 - v. Work was done with the Randolph CC.
 - b. What AJ would change about the Quimby plan
 - i. Increase reserve pockets in some parts, particularly 4 (might not even touch that). ~30% in some places.
 - ii. EAB is nearby, might suggest some changes to 1, 3, 7.
 - iii. Focusing on ash would be great. Parcels 1 and 3 are >50% ash.
 - iv. Thin the white pine plantation (would be lucrative).
 - c. Some logistics/specifics
 - i. Could probably generate ~\$20,000 from harvesting 1, 3, 7.
 - ii. Recommendation to do mill tallies instead of doing it by volume.
 - iii. "cut to length" (leave the trimmings on site) vs. whole tree removal.
 - iv. Deductions would include:

1. landing (could also make it to become a parking lot, maybe through a Stewardship Contract)
2. road improvement (there are potential savings if the town can provide the materials)
 - v. Access might be best at the end of Woodland.
 - vi. We need to touch up blazes and boundaries.
- d. Next steps, to move forward:
 - i. AJ will talk with the town about road improvements and how much that would cost.
 - ii. Talk with the town about whether it needs to go out to bid or if we can go with the logger who did Sayward.
 - iii. AJ will send a work agreement to the town.
 - iv. AJ will start marking and sorting things out this summer (mark lines, pull invasives).
 - v. Work would probably happen in winter '25-'26.
5. Pollinator Patch at the school
 - a. We need to pay Gary Slack for rototilling, \$100 for each of the two times. Chris will follow-up.
 - b. Emily will connect with Mark and others about having middle schoolers help with planting.
6. Seeds
 - a. The CC authorizes Therese to purchase ¼ lb of bulk seeds to plant with the school and the purchase of ~200 individual pollinator seed packets for the library. Lisa will follow up.
7. Any other business
 - a. Reviewed Terms of Conservation Commission members (tabled to the next meeting)
 - i. Mary Floyd 2025 all 3-year terms
 - ii. Ferron Griffin 2025
 - iii. Emily Miller 2025
 - iv. Danny Dover 2025
 - v. Lisa Campbell 2026
 - vi. Mark Heckmann 2024
 - vii. W. Chris Fors 2027
 - b. CC Capital Investment Fund:
 - i. We need to run all expenditures by the Selectboard.
 - ii. Current balance = \$10, 074.50.
 - c. Brief discussion about Christian Hill/Flagpole trails.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05pm. Next meeting will be Tuesday, 6/11/24, 6:30pm at the Town office.