

Bethel Conservation Commission Minutes – 1/13/15

(note: meeting began at 8pm in the Town Hall immediately after the conclusion of the presentation by Dubois & King of plans for the buyout sites)

Present Mary Floyd, Emily Miller, Tom Warhol, Jennifer Schomp, Moe Brigham, Lisa Campbell

Action on Minutes minutes from November were approved.

Business

- Reaction to Dubois & King designs
 - No further reaction to the designs proposed by D&K earlier in the evening since these plans were discussed in depth during the meeting itself.

- Site visit to new culvert on Gilead Brook Rd.
 - Daniel Ruddell (Redstart Consulting) and Greg Russ (White River Partnership) met with Mary, Tom and Emily at the culvert of concern on 12/17/14.
 - It was agreed that the culvert was sized and placed in a way that met requirements.
 - The CC is interested in whether it would be possible to add a provision to address the replacement of culverts in areas deemed vulnerable by the Phase 2 Geomorphic Assessment (to improve resiliency, replacement culverts in vulnerable areas should be larger than those in more stable areas - at least 120% of bankfull width rather than the standard 100% of bankfull width).
 - We will ask the Selectboard about how Bethel might go about doing this.
 - This discussion also led to a discussion of the FloodReadyVT website (<http://floodready.vermont.gov/>). It was noted that Bethel has many things in place to improve flood resiliency, but a review of the website suggests that we are missing a few pieces. In particular, it seems Bethel should adopt River Corridor protection bylaws to improve flood resiliency (50' set backs for new construction are part of this document).
 - Jen, Tom and Emily will all look at the FloodReadyVT website in more depth.

- VT-12 bridge over Gilead Brook
 - doesn't seem like the bridge replacement will impact the Spring Hollow buyout property in any substantial way.
 - the CC will continue to look into whether there are any conservation opportunities that will come from the bridge replacement project.

- Branliere Town Forest
 - the CC continues to be interested in creating/maintaining trails on the property;
 - it might be too late to pull something together for the upcoming Trails grant we had considered applying for; Tom will look over the grant details to see if anything is still possible for this round;
 - Mary will get the folder with the original plans for trails from the Town Offices.

- Ancient Rd. on Dimock's Christian Hill Property
 - The CC reviewed and discussed the comprehensive summary about the VT Land Trust Project , Old Forest designation and history of the Dimock Christian Hill property that had been presented to the Selectboard by Victoria Weber.
 - The CC supports the concepts of conserving land for future generations, discouraging habitat fragmentation and promoting connectivity between important habitats. This project appears to support these important concepts as well.
 - In this instance, the CC is supportive of “throwing up” the town’s ancient road that runs through the property so that this unique conservation opportunity can go forward.

- Description of the CC for Town Report
 - We reviewed a blurb for the Town Report that Mary had drafted and submitted.

- Budget for the CC
 - The CC has requested \$500 as a budget to cover trainings, etc.

- Blending of Committee of Parks and Public Places and the CC
 - The CC had a discussion about folding the Parks and Public Places Committee into the CC.
 - No decisions were made, and all seem open to the idea.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm (and -10°F!)

Next meeting will be February 10th, at 6:30pm.