

Craftsbury Conservation Commission
Draft Minutes – September 28, 2015

Present: Chair Joe Houston, Farley Brown, Secretary June Cook, Sel Bd. Liaison Susie Houston, Treasurer Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Leah Szafranski, Steve Wright

The meeting was called to order by Chair Joe Houston at 7:05 p.m. Minutes of July 27 meeting were approved as amended. June abstained -- not present for July meeting.

Invasive Species: Elizabeth Spinney of Forest & Parks Dept. will show a mapping program which can pinpoint invasive species. The session is scheduled on Saturday, October 31, at 9:00 a.m. in the upstairs room of the Sterling College Dining Hall. The computer program is based on information from field studies using a GPS and is open to the public. People are urged to bring a laptop.

Knotweed removal project in Mill Millage went well. Joe will take the tarp away covering piles of disintegrated plants. The next step is cutting before the season's over. May, June, and July in Spring and Summer, followed by August and September in late Summer and early Fall, most effective for cutting.

Rutland Resolution: Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, and Planning Commission will encourage Select Board to sign onto Rutland Resolution re siting of renewable energy projects. Farley and Joe will meet with Select Board to explain the purpose and why it is important. The chairs of each group (CC, EC, PC) will draft a letter to present to the Select Board.

Steve moved the CC recommends the Select Board to sign onto the Rutland Resolution which urges the Legislature to give more power to communities in citing of renewable energy projects. Motion seconded by Diane and voted unanimously.

Close to 50 towns have signed onto the resolution or are writing their own with greater stringencies to give more voice to communities. The resolution doesn't develop specific standards for Craftsbury, which is another step and more difficult.

Farley reported the Planning Commission realizes they want to make a strong statement on appropriate siting and is working on language to make sure it is valid legally. Developing standards needs input from Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, and Energy Committee. NVDA is working with the Planning Commission. Planning Commission survey for Town Plan revision indicated 70 percent of respondents want siting standards for large scale industrial projects, especially over wind, hydro, biomass, and solar. Fifty percent (50%) expressed concern about smaller projects.

Crucial year in the legislature to have any impacts and not feasible to wait until town meeting. Resolution is not trying to create something for Craftsbury but wants the process to allow towns more voice in the process.

Community Visit: People need better education on Sec. 248 and the Renewable Energy Certificate of Good approval process by the Public Service Board. Having a workshop for public, hosted by all three (PC, CC, and EC) groups, to give information on the process was discussed. There is a Citizen's Guide to Sec. 248 process; limited time for public to respond, 30 days, after application is filed for CPG (Certificate of Public Good).

Wright explained there is also the technical aspect of projects which are involved.

Susie reported the Community Visit was successful, attendance was good. October 20 is Phase 2 for the follow-up process to vote priorities, form committees, or action plans.

Town Plan: Farley reported the schedule for the Revised Town Plan: Final draft should be ready in January for public hearing by Planning Commission; after Town Meeting, the Select Board has a hearing; plan must be approved by the NVDA. Expected date for approval is June.

Commission Membership: Clarification needed on status of having two open positions and Susie will verify. Search for participants – post on Front Porch Forum.

Natural Heritage: Received good comments, particularly of format with action plan. Current Use section may be moved to Land Use section. Emphasis on water quality control, no industrial wind, invasive plants.

Other: Susie reported on participation in the dump removal sites along Black River and found it a daunting task with debris of electronics, refrigerator.

Farley reported the potential mapping of the Black River northward but not sure that will happen.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by June Pichel Cook, Secretary

