

Conservation Commission Minutes
June 26, 2017

PRESENT: Joe Houston, Elinor Osborn, Diane Morgan, Steve Wright, Carol Maroni, June Cook, Farley Brown, Susie Houston

ABSENT: Emily Diaz, John Brodhead

MINUTES: Minutes of May 22, 2017 were approved.

CONSERVATION FUND DINNER: Thompson Family Farm wishes to do a benefit for the newly established Conservation Commission Fund. Commission will assist as needed. Mike Kernan will be the keynote speaker; dinner will be held outside.

Motion made and voted amended to co-sponsor the speaker at the dinner.

INVASIVE SPECIES: Joe reported he had spoken to road crew members, and they weren't aware Ketchum Hill was going to be ditched. Discussion centered on knotweed in the area and need for a plan, not a hit-or-miss observations by members of Commission or others.

Disposal of knotweed was discussed. Suggested to take to the town garage where it could be torched. Knotweed and invasives can be bagged and disposed of as garbage for landfill.

Elinor reported on large patch of gout weed and filling a ditched area in Collinsville. The issue of invasives on town right of way vs. private property presents a challenge. Controlling invasives on road work is only one way; educating property owners is essential. The Commission can't do the job alone.

It was reported people had pulled wild chervil and tossed on the road, creating hazard for people riding bikes or walking/running.

Susie suggested maybe a town position be created for someone to be in charge of locating invasive species. Richmond has such a position in its budget.

FOUR WHEELERS: Carol reported on 4-wheelers driving in the river in Collinsville rather than using the bridge to cross. Whether or not it was legal to drive in the river was discussed. Farley will investigate. If illegal, posting signage to that effect is an option.

If select board opens more roads to 4-wheelers, it was suggested public notice be made before such a decision. Susie reported there may be petitions to open more roads to 4-wheelers as there is a more organized group (VASA), similar to VAST organization. Currently, two roads are open on parts, Hatchbrook and Collinsville. Not certain which roads are open or portions thereof.

WEBSITE: Nothing is current on town website about the Conservation Fund. Whether or not guidelines needed to be established before posting to the town website was discussed. General consensus the guidelines need to be established; commission would make recommendations to be vetted and determined by select board. A procedure for the application process should be created. Conserving natural areas seems to eliminate historic sites, i.e., bridge or structures as being eligible. Coming up with guidelines to be inclusive is important as the purpose of the fund is to conserve the natural heritage in Craftsbury and donating to the fund should be open to different opportunities.

Carol reported the Land Taskforce has a survey ongoing as to what people want to conserve and protect.

It was decided to get the town report information and place on website. More discussion to be at July meeting. Elinor stressed the town clerk should have copies of the guidelines and knowledge of any procedures/applications (when established). Elinor will be point person if someone has further questions on invasive species.

TOOLS: Policy to be discussed at July meeting. Diane would give edited tools agreement to town clerk to place on town web page.