

DRAFT – CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
July 31, 2017
(Meeting held on General Store Porch—Town Hall locked due to break-in)

PRESENT: Joe Houston, Carol Maroni, Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Steve Wright, JuneCook

ABSENT: Emily Diaz, John Brodhead, Farley Brown, Susie Houston

MINUTES: June 26, 2017 minutes approved as amended.

CONSERVATION FUND DINNER: Discussion centered on role of the commission in the On-the-Farm Thompson Family fundraising dinner, August 25. The dinner is an opportunity for an interested party (Thompson family) to raise money for newly established conservation commission fund. It is a way of giving back to the community.

Commission's role is sponsoring the speaker; details of the dinner are handled by Thompson family. Concern was raised about the cost and whether the speaker should be brought back to reach a wider audience than may be at the dinner.

It has been confusing for commission members with not having details about the dinner and explaining the costs. Having the speaker after the dinner, similar to presentations given after the Community Supper, allows people to attend the talk without cost. The cost of on-the-farm dinner is \$35. Advertising the speaker portion is free after the dinner was agreed as a solution. Joe will confer with Thompson family. Advertising speaker portion is free and setting a specific time for speaker portion is essential.

Advertising on Front Porch Forum and other avenues needs to be done. Joe, Carol, and June will follow up after Joe meets with Emily about dinner and specific time for speaker.

Carol will confer with speaker about not having the facility to show videos or pictures because talk will be given outside under a tent. Giving the talk without electrical power available presents a challenge.

ATV RIVER ACCESS: Currently, Hatchbrook Road, Collinsville Rd. and Eden Mtn. are open to ATV's to give access to Hyde Park and Eden.

Game wardens were contacted in Craftsbury/Albany and who reported ATV's driving in rivers has been a continuing problem. State has specific protocols about posting signage as to wording, size, placement, etc. Both Agency of Transportation and Game wardens are involved. Where signs should be posted to be most effective, commission's role in helping with the signage wording, and educating public were discussed. If signage is visible from public road that falls under AOT regulations. It was agreed the ultimate authority and responsibility rests with the select board. Commission can help and make recommendations.

Carol reported the Land Taskforce could play a role in education about guidelines for ATV's and water regulations. Getting the word out of how to enjoy ATV's and respect natural resources, in addition to posting appropriate signage, was discussed. Consensus was a fine of \$300, which is Vermont statute, would make more people think about riding in the river.

Motion voted unanimously: "Commission should continue to investigate what signage wording is appropriate and use that information to make recommendations to the select board to post such signage."

Carol will continue her investigation on signage, ATV regulations and water regulations. She was authorized to make further contacts.

Joe reported researching VASA website and not finding anything relevant about regulations. He was authorized to send a letter to VASA officials expressing commission's support of recreational activities but is concerned when those activities can damage natural resources and safety issues. VAST is very vocal about snowmobilers following regulations and is very educational in promoting safety in snowmobiling.

Steve indicated no desire to promote ATV usage in Craftsbury but commission needs to be politic in addressing the issue. Joe felt making inquiries of VASA about concern for safety and environmental factors brings a transparency and awareness.

FACEBOOK/WEBSITE: Discussion on Facebook page tabled.

Diane is updating information about the commission and conservation commission fund. She will be posting general information on invasive species, tools, and form for borrowing tools. Simplifying site and links to town plan will be added. Posting a mission on the website requires more discussion. Defining a mission hasn't really been done.

Diane will tweak web-page and circulate through e-mail before posting.

CONSERVATION FUND USAGE: Tabled.

Commission is working on a set of guidelines but drafting them to keep open options and to keep within a mission. Coming up with guidelines on how the fund will be used before using the fund needs further clarification. Consensus was this is a sub-committee task. Sub-committee formed: Joe, Carol, and Elinor.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

The commission will hold its next meeting on August 28, 2017 in the Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by June Pichel Cook, Secretary.

