

3/17
MIN P.1



Cornwall Conservation Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of March 17, 2022 held 10:30 am
conducted by Zoom Session

Commissioners in attendance: Patrick Mulberry, Katie Freygang, Heidi Cunnick, and Debby Bennett, and Nancy Berry. Janell Mullen Cornwall planning consultant, Margie Purnell, Ella Clark and Philippa Durrant members of the public in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 am

The minutes of the meeting of February 17, 2022 were accepted

TREASURER'S REPORT

- A budget amount of \$2217 remains for the commission expenses for fiscal year 2021-2022.
- A **MOTION** was passed to submit the 2022-2023 budget
- Heidi will get an invoice for the \$100 expense for "Barberry Hackathon" event.
- If funds remain at our April meeting, the commission will allocate \$600 to be used for purchase of replacement testing equipment for the Lake Task Force.

RURAL CHARACTER

- Janell Mullen helped explain how the new state legislation (Public Law 21-29 Section 8-2) addresses land use reform and governs how towns can regulate land use.
- Essentially the state regulation stipulates the use of

reasonable consideration of *physical site characteristics* rather than the use of the term "rural characteristics". Since that term had been used in an exclusionary manner in some previous instances, it was to be expunged from zoning regulations.

3/17 p. 2

- Mulberry relayed that Anna Timell had informally requested that the conservation commission to come up with a memo or statement that could be used in lieu of the term "rural character". This memo or statement would serve to provide decision making clarity and to describe specific physical and cultural assets of Cornwall's landscapes.
- The commission invited Janell Mullen for insight into how the commission's efforts to develop this statement could be framed to be of practical use for Planning & Zoning.
- Janell suggested that such a memo or statement could be especially useful to help the planning commission clarify what criteria would be appropriate for approval of special permit applications as long as it conformed to standards of health, safety and public welfare as well as to serve to protect Cornwall's environmental and cultural assets.
- Mulberry reiterated that one of the goals of the conservation commission is to serve as a resource to the planning commission on matters related to conservation.
- Deb Bennett inquired whether the use of metrics (quantifying natural & cultural assets) could help to further define physical features.
- Janell agreed and added that mapping could further reinforce how these goals can be communicated to stakeholders and residents alike.
- Janell will relay the gist of this conversation to Anna Timell and the planning commission.

RIDGELINE PROTECTION

- Deb reports that ridgeline protection cannot be considered 'voluntary', since no regulation can be optional.
- Sean will need more time to complete the power point presentation of the ridgeline regulation.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

- Margie reports progress on three chapters:

Forestry: Core Forests, Forest Threats, and state activities

Wildlife: Additional data regarding species found in Cornwall

Wetlands & Watercourses: in draft form

3/17 p. 3

NOTEWORTHY PLACES

- Heidi Cunnick will present ideas for live Google mapping of noteworthy places at the next meeting.

REMOVAL OF TREES AT HOUSATONIC MEADOWS STATE PARK

- Katie reports the working committee is focused on three aspects:

Re-write vegetation hazard evaluation

Develop a detailed plan for restoration of the area

Recommend how DEEP may reorganize to avoid a repeat of the circumstances surrounding removal of vegetation on state property

OUTREACH/WEB SITE

- Katie reports that the following categories of events are planned for the upcoming period:

Barberry Hackathon 10 am April 10th at 10 Pine Street

Insect walk with Dr. Rob Clark April 30th 1 pm at the entry to the Trinity preserve

Welles Preserve plant species labeling

SPRAYING ALONG THE RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY

- The commission supports the position put forth in Anna Timell's letter addressing the spraying of herbicide along the railroad right of way
- Heidi volunteers to join Anna's group addressing this issue

SUSTAINABLE CT

- Katie reports that efforts are underway to develop a water resource program in conjunction with HVA and formulation of a "arts" group.

3/17 p.4

MOTION to adjourn at 12:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Mulberry