

Monkton ANAC Meeting Minutes for 24 March, 2015

In Attendance

Members: Deb Gaynor, Sam Burr, Corine Farewell, and Laura Farrell;

Absent: Rachel Schattman

Guests: Alison Lesure; Meg Handler; and Bill Marks (Hinesburg Conservation Commission, HCC);
Matt Witten (Starksboro Conservation Commission, SCC)

1) Laura called the meeting to order (7:10 pm)

2) Introductions. Alison works for Rainforest Alliance, background in environmental conservation and environmental policy; Bill is acting chair of HCC, which manages Gephrag Park, does educational programs, advises the DRB/zoning board regarding larger projects and new rural zoning regulations, currently working for the PC doing an open space (green space) plan to guide the DRB and PC in analyzing proposed ordinances and developments regarding impacts on open space, Bill's background is in law. They expect the green space study will get incorporated into the Town Plan, so it can be used by the DRB in legal actions. Meg is a real estate agent, active on Lake Iroquois association, interested in water quality issues. There is also a Trails committee, an energy committee, two different economic development groups, etc. Matt noted that in Starksboro, the CC covers everything, which makes them too spread out (there are 6 on their committee). Matt noted that Starksboro, unlike all the valley communities, has a block of upland forest. The CC is also responsible for stewardship of their town forest, and for managing the forest for income as well as forest health. They built a recreational path with a footbridge. They also helped make the resource section of the Town Plan more robust. His background is environmental education and water quality. They sponsor the maple sugarmakers weekend (they started it), and they sponsor a harvest supper that benefits their 4 Winds educational program.

Hinesburg has a wildlife sightings and a corridor map on their town website. They used UVM and ANR for help with maps (not CRPC). Bill mentioned that they looked to Norwich for an innovative model for zoning. Having a wildlife biologist as their Town Planner has been a key aid to their work.

The Hinesburg group noted that developing recreational trails has helped raise awareness of wildlife, and they have recognized that maintaining large forest blocks improves the quality of the forest. Trails development requires a minimum 50 foot corridor. Many of the ones they've built are in already conserved areas. They monitor for invasive species.

3) Matt brought a wildlife sightings map that includes quite a lot of Monkton; Robert Turner gave him the map to bring, and knows the background on it (if we have further questions).

Matt talked about connectivity using our map. He and Laura have both seen otter slides in two different places on Hogback. Matt believes there is a lot of movement parallel to States Prison Hollow Road, and near Baldwin Creek. There is some conserved land on the west side of Starksboro, east side of Monkton interspersed with the Hanson farm.

The Hinesburg town forests is in the neighborhood of 700 acres. The Starksboro forest (300 acres) is actively logged and tapped, and the profits are used to benefit conservation activities and environmental education programs.

Laura: does either town have wildlife data in a GIS-compatible format? No answers.

Laura posed the question: how would we work together on a project? Hinesburg—the Hinesburg Land Trust is the right organization for ANAC to talk to regarding land conservation efforts. Jean Kadash is probably the key person to talk to. In Starksboro, it is only the CC, but they don't typically fund projects, and have no standing fund for that purpose. For the next five years, the taxpayers have already committed themselves to a major construction project, so any funding would be very unlikely.

This ends the joint meeting section; the guests all departed.

4) Sam moved and Laura seconded that we approve the minutes from February 11th. Sam moved, Laura seconded that we approve the minutes as amended. All aye.

5) Sam moved and Laura seconded that we approve the minutes from March 2nd. All aye.

6) Deb will find out what the Selectboard thinks about paying someone to take minutes for us. Alison Lesure expressed an interest. Deb will find out what the town will pay, and if they're willing to do this.

7) Laura told us that Al amended his request for the Cota appraisal from \$300 to \$500. Sam noted that we are asking the appraiser to do two configurations, which increases the cost. Laura moved and Sam seconded that we approve this amendment; all in favor—aye. Deb moved and Sam seconded that we submit the amended application for the appraisal costs All in favor.

8) Rotax parcels—Sam noted that development on Hardscrabble Road is impacting some wetlands; these wetlands are easily fragmented by development that uses wetlands to bulk up acreage, and as a result they become fragmented and damaged, and lose their functionality. Corine will take the drafts of the site report, and edit them into a final stage.

9) Laura talked to Jon Binhammer about other parcels in Monkton that we have had conversations with the landowners about. Laura has tried to make those connections happen, and we will keep tabs on this.

10) Other business:

- Deb will talk about the Starksboro water quality chat next time.
- Laura will tell Ivor that she would like to be on the viewshed working group when she is back in town, but they'll have to wait until then. Sam will keep tabs on it until then.

11) Deb moved to adjourn. Corine seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Gaynor, for Rachel Schattman, ANAC Secretary