

**Town of Monkton  
Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 6:30pm  
Monkton Town Hall  
(Approved September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019)**

**Members Present:** Laura Farrell, Chelsea Smiley, Ian Smiley, Jaime Schulte, Ann Johnston Miller

**Members On-Leave:** Joe Roman

**Members Absent:** None

**Guests:** Craig Heindel (Chair of the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission)

Laura called the meeting to order at 6:03. Jaime will be the minutes-taker.

**1) Approve minutes from 13 June 2019**

- a. Chelsea moved to approve the minutes. Ann seconded. Some minor edits were made in discussion. Chelsea moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ann seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0).

**2) Plan for meeting with Craig Heindel on participating in the review process.**

- a. Developed a list of questions to make good use of his time.

**3) Collaborations with related town committees and roles:** Planning Commission (PC), Development Review Board (DRB), Town Forest Committee (TFC), Agricultural and Natural Areas Committee (ANAC), Recreation Committee, and the Zoning Administrator

- a. There is a meeting on 9/3 that Wendy Sue Harper from the PC has invited ANAC, DRB, Conservation Commission, and the Town Forest Committee to attend, to hear Monica Przyperhart of Vermont Fish & Wildlife speak regarding forest blocks and habitat connectivity.
- b. Planning Commission – Ian will reach out asking to get on the PC agenda or have them send a rep to our meeting in late August or after.
- c. Zoning Administrator – Kris Perlee is on our agenda for the August meeting.
- d. DRB – aim for September or October to meet with DRB and establish a common understanding of our respective roles and how we can help as it relates to the application/permit process. Vermont Statutes Title 24 Chapters 117 and 118 apply to the roles of a DRB and a Conservation Commission.
- e. ANAC – Jaime and Laura are on ANAC, so we will address the question of a representative at a future meeting.
- f. Town Forest Committee – Jaime is on the Town Forest Committee, so will function as the representative for now.
- g. Recreation Committee - TBD

**4) Contact Road Crew about parsnip mowing and cleaning equipment and using long reach to take out patches.**

- a. Chelsea will contact the Road Foreman to ask about mowing timing during the rest of the season.

**5) Craig Heindel** visited us on the topic of the role of a CC and how to participate in review processes.

- a. Craig is the Chair of the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission (FCC), which is advisory in nature. It is one of the oldest Conservation Commissions in Vermont, founded in 1987.

- b. Write-ups about the FCC are included in Ferrisburgh's Annual Town Report for town meeting, which can be read on the Town Clerk's webpage on the town's website, and the FCC has a webpage on the town site.
- c. One role for the FCC is to steward the Ferrisburgh Town Forest, which is managed for wildlife habitat (bobcats are denning there, etc.). The FCC does some walks to maintain property lines, post signs, check for invasive species, etc.
- d. The FCC had no line item in the town budget for many years, but starting about 5 years ago obtained a small budget for conference fees, membership, educational events, etc. The current annual budget is \$550.
- e. FCC's involvement in the planning/zoning process – looks at permits and considers if there could be a conservation impact (using ANR Atlas, etc.). Representative attends hearings and presents the FCC's findings. Those findings are created in an FCC meeting and someone is assigned to write the opinion and present it. This can be helpful to Planning and Zoning. The FCC's focus is usually to advise whether there are impacts and suggest mitigations for those impacts and to suggest how to improve applications from a conservation perspective...ideally without negatively effecting an application. For instance, suggesting riparian buffers or hedgerows to improve habitat connectivity for wildlife, etc.
- f. The Ferrisburgh Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission Chair and Zoning Board Chair will often now request FCC involvement in projects with an obvious conservation aspect, thanks to good relationships developed over time.
- g. The Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission was involved in the 2017 update to the Town Plan, and they are now participating on a joint committee involving Planning, Zoning, and Conservation members to update the zoning regulations.
- h. The FCC hosts a few education sessions each year, with speakers and/or fieldtrips.
- i. In the last three years, the FCC has coordinated volunteers to conduct monitoring in July at the three sites in town whose bat colonies are being evaluated by VT Fish & Wildlife personnel.

## 6) Updates

- a. Title 24, Chapter 118 – Vermont Conservation Commission Statute
  - Discussed the chapter on the powers and duties of Conservation Commissions in Vermont.
- b. Elect officers (Clerk/Secretary, Treasurer, Chair)
  - Postponed this item until the August meeting
- c. Add to calendar
  - Community day – August 24th
  - Monica Przyperhart -forest blocks in town, Planning Commission, Sept 3 at 7:30.
- d. Brennan Variance Application (Jaime)
  - Jaime conveyed his observations from the two DRB meetings which involved the Brennan Variance since our last meeting. We discussed how best to collaborate with other town agencies and our role in the process.
- e. Raven Ridge (Ian and Chelsea)
  - Chelsea reported the presence of parsnip to TNC in the marsh by the loosestrife and in the orchard. Chelsea and Ian also noted minimal signs of human traffic in the off-limits area (bobcat denning area), which is good.
- f. Recent Comments emails and new Applications (Ian and Chelsea)
  - Vermont is looking at groundwater/aquifer resources in the state and would like to better protect these resources from commercial interests. It would be interesting to better understand Monkton's resources.

- g. Most recent development on storage of permanent and temporary committee documents on the town website and on Google Drive (Jaime)
  - Jaime talked with Stephen Pilcher and Betsy Brown about setting up a town Google Drive space. Betsy is already using Google Drive for the DRB and Selectboard. Mark Boltz-Robinson (town resident and security/IT expert) has also offered to advise on the topic, which the Selectboard Chair is receptive to.
- h. Parsnip community volunteer 'opportunities' (Jaime)
  - Three community parsnip events have been held in Morse Park and adjacent to MCS. A few thousand parsnip have been eliminated by 16 town residents clearing an estimated 70% of the park to-date. Two more events are planned in July to wrap up this season's effort.
- i. Pond Brook Field Guide status (Laura)
  - The library is going to pay for the binding of the Field Guide out of the Strawberry Festival proceeds as a collaboration of the Library, ANAC, and the Conservation Commission.

7) **Meeting dates** confirmed for August 8<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm and September 11<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm

#### **8) Other Business**

- a. Laura asked about joining the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC). There would be an annual membership fee of \$60 which we would need to talk to the Selectboard about (currently the MCC does not appear to have a budget).
  - Chelsea moved that we become members of the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions. Ian seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0).
  - We will look at the AVCC website and consider joining their listserv.

#### **Adjournment**

Ian moved to adjourn. Jaime seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0). Adjourned at 9:17.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Jaime Schulte  
Clerk**