

Plainfield Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes 18 November 2015

Convened 7:15 p.m.

Present: Sarah Albert, Becky Buchanan, Charlie Cogbill, Julie Hackbarth, Kate Harper, Mary Trerice, Jan Waterman

(Jessica Rubin sent a message that she would have liked to come, but is sick. She hopes to come next month, and intends to bring some ideas to consider about invasives.)

Minutes: Minutes from September meeting approved. (No minutes from October, as that meeting was cancelled.)

Natural Communities Inventory: Brett's field work should be wrapped up by now. Jan will confirm with him, and we will plan a date at our next meeting for the second public forum.

Rain Garden Work Day: Kate reported that she, Shawn White, Project Manager for Friends of the Winooski (FOW), Jessica Rubin, Allen Clark, and Michael Billingsley pitched in to do a thorough clean up of the garden, and installed lots of new plants too. It was a very productive day, and the results (photographed by Michael) are extremely satisfying.

Mskaskek Brook Naming: Kate and Mary reported that the November 7th ceremony at the brook, and the following social time at Judy Cyprian's house, were very well attended by a wide array of people, and it was a really nice gathering. Many thanks to Michael for organizing it. Dennis Post, from the state Department of Libraries, expressed deep gratitude for this event, and gave quite a moving, excellent speech. He also complemented the quality of the application and the process for choosing the name. Before this, it's been at least 200 years since the Abenaki language has been embraced in the naming of a geographic feature. The opportunity to sit and talk with Grandmother Jeanne at Judy's house was particularly meaningful to many.

Town Forest: Logging job is complete, and by all accounts was excellent. The Emersons did a wonderful job, left the area neat and in very good shape, and "went above and beyond" to make a neighbor happy, by volunteering their own and their trucker's time to remove roadside brush. Courtney (of Redstart) reports the timber yield exceeded expectations; she estimates the gross income from stumpage will be around \$11,000. Redstart's costs will amount to about \$2,500, so the town will have a nice fund for town forest improvements and maintenance. Seeding will be done in the spring. Sarah created and posted several informational signs, using language from the management plan (more of those to come.) She also made and posted "No Vehicles" signs. The Emersons constructed several water bars, and Courtney intends to add a couple more, but any vehicular traffic will destroy the bars. With the area now much more open, this is a concern that needs to be addressed ASAP. We discussed the best solution; large boulders placed to close off access seem to be the answer. A source for boulders and a means of transporting and placing them need to be determined. Stumpage fees could be applied to these costs.

Major thanks to Sarah for her continued, substantial work on so many aspects of the town forest project, including:

Recreational Trails Grant: The town forest logging job created excellent potential trails. A trails grant is available from Parks and Rec. They're asking for "pre-applications" by December 1st; final applications

due February 1st. Sarah will work on these, with the focus on trail head design and protection. We set a tentative date to visit the post-logging forest and begin planning trails: December 6th, 1 p.m. Sarah will ask Jenny Warshaw (who designed the trails in Stranahan Town Forest) and Rose Paul (of Cross Vermont Trail) to join us.

We also discussed the possibility, if given Selectboard approval, of adjusting the town forest management plan to allow bicycles access to certain trails. This might encourage more use of the town forest, and provide more caretakers for it. A bike group cooperated with the Stranahan committee to design and maintain non-motorized bike trails there. Sarah will further explore this possibility, and invite a representative from the bike group to join us on December 6th.

Invasives Work Day in Town Forest: In October, we had a pre-logging work day to remove as many invasives as we could. Sarah, Jan, and Allen Clark got a lot done, and Allen Soule was on hand for part of the time. Much more of this work needs to be done, and now that the forest is so much more open we need to closely monitor the forest for some time to come.

Sue Morse: Presentation Thursday November 19th, 7 p.m. at the Goddard Haybarn. Jan will provide CC info and sign up sheet.

Triple Point Natural Area: Jonathan Decker (VLT regional stewardship manager) contacted Jan to ask if we were doing any work on invasives there. We'll plan an inspection visit for next spring.

Annual Report: Budget for 2016/2017 due 12/16; narrative due 12/31. Sarah and Jan, respectively, will follow up.

Village Street Tree Inventory: Conducted October 14th by four people from Urban & Community Forestry, and Sarah. Very efficient process, the results of which (photos and information about each tree) are available in the ANR database, and a report will be sent to the Selectboard. Here's a link to the inventory: <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/> Zoom to Plainfield, and then zoom further in to see the village. Click the "show layers" button at the bottom of the side panel (it looks like a stack of papers). Scroll to Forest, Parks & Recreation and click on the + sign to expand. Click in the box next to Urban Tree Inventory. The tree symbols on the map are all evergreens—if you click on one, a window will open to show the info we collected on the tree.

Letter to the Selectboard: Per his request, Kate read Michael's letter of resignation from the Commission, which he has sent to the Selectboard.

Meeting adjourned 8:55 p.m.

Next meeting: December 16th, at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jan Waterman, Secretary
Plainfield Conservation Commission