

Conservation Commission of the Town of Halifax, Vermont: Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

June 26, 2019

Present: Stephan Chait (SC), Jessica Cooney (JC), Laurel Copeland (LC), Linda Huebner (LH), Dov Towler (DT)

Meeting convened 7:03 pm

1. **Minutes** - Voted to approve previous meeting minutes, of May 28, 2019. SC commented that the minutes should be identified as “draft” version when sent to Robbin Gabriel for posting on the Halifax website; they lose draft status only when approved at a subsequent meeting.
2. **Election of Officers** - Elected Stephan Chait as Chair, Laurel Copeland as Clerk, and Linda Huebner as Treasurer. Discussion of the treasurer position noted that there are currently no funds with which to open a bank account for the Commission.
3. **Mission Statement** – Jessica Cooney distributed the draft Mission statement (from last meeting) with notes from National Park Service and “Stonewalls & Cellarholes: A Guide For Landowners On Historic Features and Landscapes In Vermont’s Forests” (available at <http://www.vermontwoodlands.org/documents/stonewallsandcellarholes.pdf>) on how to express manmade resources the Commission might want to conserve (such as Native American artifacts or old cellar holes). The members voted unanimously to adopt the revised Mission statement: “The Halifax Conservation Commission, through education, advocacy, and action, is dedicated to the preservation, protection, and restoration of the natural environment and wildlife in balance with the surrounding cultural resources.”
4. **Cultural Resources** - Discussion related to cultural resources noted that a former Halifax resident and friend of Dov Towler’s, Rich Holschuh, knows a lot about the Abenaki; Dov will ask him what kinds of Native American artifacts are in Halifax.
5. **Windham Wildlife Connectivity Project (WWCP)** – 3 Commission members (LH, JC, LC) attended the June 5th meeting of the WWCP, held in Marlboro Community Center; 2 guests from Halifax also attended, making Halifax dominate presence at the gathering of about 12 persons. The low-key meeting discussed project management approaches, settling on Project-focused with a point person for each endeavor (such as the mapping effort led by Ash or collaborating with efforts in MA regarding the wildlife corridor). All Halifax Conservation Commission members are asked to complete the online survey of preferred WWCP projects (the survey also asks whether you would like to be a point person). LC will forward the email to JC and DT.
6. **Resilient Roads and Watershed Forum on June 13 2019** – 3 Commission members attended (SC, DT, JC) the forum on Act 64 water / road runoff put on by Windham Regional Commission, Town of Halifax, Halifax Conservation Commission, and Green River Watershed. Attendees included Maria Caputo demonstrating the stream table, Brad Rafus, Lewis Sumner, the Road Commissioner from Marlboro, John

Gagnon (Rep.) and Emily Davis from Windham Regional Commission. The session was attended by approx. 25 persons.

7. **Location for July 23, 2019 Meeting** – Because Diana Todd offered to present about online mapping resources that could be used in a conservation inventory, members voted to hold the next meeting at Laurel Copeland’s house, 1513 Hanson Road as WiFi is available. Hanson runs between Collins Hill Road and Hatch School Road. 1513 has a long uphill driveway with turnaround at the house. The members asked how long Diana’s presentation would be, and whether Patti Smith and Diana Todd might comprise the entire agenda. LC and LH to follow up with the invited speakers.
8. **Open Meeting Law** – LH requested a clarification regarding emails among members. Informational emails and meeting arrangements are permitted; discussion of what to do about information is not.
9. **New Business: Wild Parsnips (LH)** – Although wild parsnips are common in surrounding towns, they seem uncommon in Halifax. This item will be added to the Commission agenda of things to discuss and inventory in the Town of Halifax. Please add this item to future agenda.
10. **New Business: Island in Green River, Guilford** – the case of the island dwelling that was destroyed by Hurricane Irene (2011) was discussed. This may be an example of the problem of hazardous materials in homes, activities that Conservation Commission may be involved in. Some research is needed to get the details of this story.
11. **New Business: Recycling Hazard Materials (JC)** – Need to educate residents on this topic. Please add this item to future agenda.
12. **New Business: Wildlife Rehabilitation at BEEC (JC)** – JC and LC attended. JC volunteered to help make cages for the BEEC.
13. **New Business: Halifax Conservation Commission on Social Media (JC)** – JC proposes creating a Facebook page for the Commission to make it more visible to young residents. The page could host information on events and education materials. Please add this item to future agenda.
14. **New Business: Logo (JC)** – JC proposed the Commission choose a logo. She presented a few preliminary ideas and will bring more to a subsequent meeting. Please add this item to future agenda.

Meeting adjourned 8:31 pm