

Conservation Commission of the Town of Halifax, Vermont: Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 7:00 PM
at the Halifax Town Office

CALLED TO ORDER at 7:01 pm

CHANGES AND/OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – none

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

September 25, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes – approved by unanimous vote

NEW BUSINESS

School's Food Waste Composting and Management – (JC) the school has a large composter that is partly underground and can take all food scraps including meat scraps. Sandy Pentak is working with someone who is intermittently available but will ask for CC help if needed. Win-win: Athena of SWS gets recognition; school complies with state law; town looks good. JC will follow-up with Sandy P. LC described how the grade 1/2 children are coming to Senior Meal in the Hall and last week began to learn how to separate their lunch trash into COW and trash. A closer relationship between the Community Hall COW and the school composting can be pursued.

Signs at the Halifax Recycling Site – Athena of SWS provided some paper signage that needs lamination. Need to provide education regarding the importance of separating materials correctly and avoiding contaminants in the recycling dumpsters (such as dirt and glassware and pottery). Bulletin board would be nice for signage. HCC should coordinate with Select Board to put up an enclosed bulletin board at the recycling dumpsters for the signage. Should there be a sign that says, “Halifax Residents Only”? People put garbage or appliances or bottles within plastic bags in the dumpsters, and that costs the town money. SC and JC will try to bring this up at next SB meeting.

There is a cement pad on the site near the recycling dumpsters. Would Town consider putting up a simple shed to facilitate dealing with the garbage, returnables, and such? Potential need for staffing. They are supposed to be cleaning up the house next door, too.

Communications Venues for Events – Conservation Commission does not have a budget for direct-mail. We have used FPF, the FPF, Town Website, Halifax Newsletter, Flyers at PO/Town Clerk/Halifax Center. How about Postcards on Zazzle? How to raise money for this? At the Green-Up table in May we could put out a donation can. Can we work towards a set of enclosed notice boards for several corners in the Town? LH will look into how other entities within the Town government can receive money. SC & JC will ask the SB about adding more notice boards on Town property (recycling location; some corners).

Emerald Ash Borer in Windham County – LC provided a summary of the training she attended in Guilford in July. The Emerald Ash Borer is now confirmed in Bennington County in Stamford and bordering towns: eastern Pownal, southern Woodford, and western Readsboro. This puts Whitingham in the area of high risk. Interactive EAB map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=cfda013ad1464b7b9103a3d7806f0cc5>

Dealing with EAB involves several action areas: choose an approach to dealing with the ash trees; identify ash trees that may impact roads & dwellings / personal property; educate community members. These are typically iterative and overlapping activities.

State of Vt Dept Forests Parks & Rec/UVM Extension have information on how to inventory ash trees.

<https://www.vtcommunityforestry.org/ash-inventory> The training in Guilford that LC attended involved learning to download GIS maps into an inventory software (Collector), enter observations of specific trees while the software / your smart phone or tablet attach the GIS coordinates, and upload your observations to the State's map of ash trees. Typically, each town's Conservation Commission & other volunteers map that town's ash

trees. Depending on the municipality, the focus will be on ash trees on public roads, or ash trees elsewhere such as in urban parks.

A few online resources – the first 4 were handed out to CC members who were urged to share with others:

Homeowner's Guide to EAB: <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/homeownerseab.pdf>

Ash Tree Identification (bulletin E-2942): <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/documents/E-2942.pdf>

Municipal Ash Management Strategies in Response to Emerald Ash Borer:

https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/eab_municipal_management_strategies_final.pdf

EAB Information for Vt Forest Landowners:

https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Health/Library/EAB%20Landowner%20FAQs.pdf

Emerald Ash Borer Management – overview & links to many PDF's

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/community-planning/tree-pests>

OLD BUSINESS

Denison Property – Update – the 1240-acre parcel with house is still on the market for \$1.99M.

Environmentalists are very interested in this property. What would the CC like to do about this issue? It's in the conservation area of Town and in the watershed. Let's monitor the situation.

Logo – Update – Netta Kies responded to LC's request for a Halifax artist to provide a logo for our CC. LC sent an example of a circle containing stone wall, maple tree, deer. Netta sent 2 sketches of the same items saying HCC should tell her what animals and features are wanted. Members noted that the leaves are not maple leaves; a circle is nice; the wall represents the cultural resources How about an ash tree? Vermont symbols include apples, clover, Morgan horse, granite, Monarch, brook trout, painted turtle, hermit thrush. CC members agreed that we want a stylized CGI graphic that is in a circle with a river for curve, a fern (with a mouse behind it?), stone walls for cultural resources, tree.

Conservation Commission on Social Media – Update (JC) – LC needs to find the admin invitation and accept it. Cannot find it. Name change for site not working possibly because fb is waiting for LC to accept the admin invitation

Cultural Resources - Update – DT recommends we drop the idea of having Rich Holschuh as a speaker on the Abenaki as he seems to be too busy. JC went to an Indigenous Peoples Day event where he spoke and it was wonderful, about sacred places with whirlpools and petroglyphs the Abenaki were on the land.

OTHER BUSINESS –

SC: Next meetings are Nov 26 (Tues before Thanksgiving) and Christmas Eve 12/24. All felt that 11/26 was fine but 12/24 was unfeasible and should be skipped or rescheduled.

JC commented that it would be nice to have Chris Schadler come talk about coyotes. DT would like to hear more about invasive plants. LH proposed investigating speakers on various topics to determine availability and potential costs.

Windham Regional Commission is having a speaker on Tuesday, Oct 29, at 6 pm at Newbrook Fire Station in Newfane/Brookline, discussing Wildlife Connectivity from Canada south into Massachusetts.

HEARING OF VISITORS – N/A

ADJOURNMENT at 8:40 pm