

Bolton Conservation Commission
November 16, 2015 Minutes
Bolton Town Office

Members present: Lars Botzjorns (chair), Virginia Haviland, Steve McLeod, Amy Ludwin, Ali Kosiba, Jerry Mullen
Guest: Leslie Pelch

The meeting came to order at 6:02 p.m.

1. Public comment - none.
2. Minutes of the September 21, 2015 meeting - Accepted as written.

3. Watershed grant

The letter to landowners will focus on obtaining permission for the contractor to access their lands to conduct the inventory. Mention will be made of the Friends of the Winooski River restoration program (which is already almost fully subscribed for 2016). Amy will contact Arrowwood Environmental for a bid on the inventory, and she will assist Virginia in drafting the landowner permission letter. Steve asked about the legal ramifications of finding rare or endangered species during the inventory: does that information have the potential to restrict land use? He suggested it would be proper to inform landowners of possible scenarios. Ali and Amy will look into this issue. January is the deadline for submitting a proposal to UVM for a Field Naturalist, while we will not hear about the grant until February. Ali will discuss this timing with UVM's Jeff Hughes.

4. Meet with Select Board

Lars presented the SB with the plaque commemorating the Preston Pond Conservation Area as Chittenden County's model town forest from the Town Forest Centennial Committee.

The Select Board voted to support the Watershed grant application and use reserve funds (unspent from a previous grant) in the amount of \$1,500 as a match.

On a separate topic, the SB informed the CC of a Bolton resident's request to trap in the area of Preston Pond and the Upper Pond. Generally, trapping is allowed in the PPCA. The SB asked for assistance in completing the permission form. The CC will contact the trapper to find out the species he intends to trap, methods to be used, and the timing of trapping. The CC will inform the public of any precautions (e.g., keeping pets on leashes) with signage at the trailhead and via the Web.

5. FY 2017 budget request and town report submission

Jerry moved, Ali 2nd, to request \$500 for the CC's operating budget in FY2017. All were in favor. Lars will the CC submission to the report, and distribute to the CC for comment.

6. Fiddlehead harvesting education and monitoring

Ali had previously distributed info on fiddlehead (over)harvesting. Generally, guidelines point to harvesting less than 50% of the crown to avoid negative impacts, however the subject as not been studied much. The BCC agreed (Jerry moved, Virginia 2nd, voted 5-1 in favor) to cosign a letter authored by the Richmond Conservation Commission to local restaurants and stores asking for their help. Other organizations signing on are the Richmond Trails Committee, The Richmond Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy. Steve had reservations about the one pound per seller limit, as it should matter how widely they are picked. Amy will relay this concern to the Richmond CC for consideration in the letter. Bolton will wait for the results of the floodplain forest inventory before proceeding with more targeted education and management of our fern populations. However, Jerry and Ali will submit general information to the Bolton Gazette and FPF about the sensitivity of fern populations to overharvesting.

7. Preston Pond Conservation Area

- a. ROW boundary issue on Stage Road side - due to time constraints discussion was tabled for the most part, save for the suggestion to have VAST contact the landowner to ask for formal permission for the current route to cross private land.

- b. Trailhead and trail junction signage update

Leslie Pelch asked for feedback on further information to provide on her draft maps, as well as the appropriate formats given the audience (e.g., trailhead map cases versus Web-based information). It was agreed the maps should not look too busy and that only the PPCA property boundary should be shown among all the properties in the area. It was noted that there are two areas where the trail system crosses onto private land. Lars will ask the Streeters for formal permission to use their land (NW corner of the PPCA). The ROW issue (item 7a) will be discussed further. It was suggested that in addition to stewardship info provided at the trailhead kiosks, the maps themselves should include pertinent info, such as seasonal restrictions and safety messages. On-line maps will be available in a variety of formats. A large format map as well as a QR code will be posted at the two kiosks, as well as an acrylic map holder for paper maps to be reused as much as possible. Maps could also be posted at intersections ("You are here"). Leslie will present revisions at the next meeting.

- c. Trail improvements update (VT Trails grant)

Lars is submitting reimbursement requests to the State for the costs related to various work done by the Boy Scouts over the past year.

d. Beaver baffle / VAST trail flooding concerns

Jerry estimates that three truckloads of gravel may adequately raise the tread level by the Upper Pond to alleviate flooding concerns in conjunction with the baffle. Lars will contact VAST and the Streeters about moving ahead with this project in 2016.

e. Mountain bike use and clarity of management direction

Tabled, although the subject should be addressed in the management plan.

f. Forest and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan

Keith Thompson is still working on revising the draft plan with recommendations for providing early successional habitat.

8. Other business

Wheeler field: a proposal is in the works for a planned unit development along with preservation of public space (sold back to the town). Lexie Haselton's father is the builder in question, and she asked for a liaison between them and the Town. The BCC wants to be informed/involved, but defers to the Selectboard for leadership on the issue.

9. Next meeting agenda

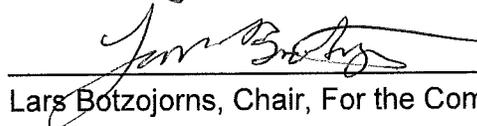
PPCA trailhead information, VAST trail ROW and flooding concerns, hosting a primitive biathalon at PPCA, mountain bike use and clarity of management direction at the PPCA, PPCA Forest Management plan, finalize floodplain inventory contractor, landowner permission letter for the floodplain inventory.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Haviland and Lars Botzjorns

These minutes were read and approved by the Bolton Conservation Commission on:

January 18, 2016


Lars Botzjorns, Chair, For the Commission