

Town of Bolton  
Conservation Commission Minutes  
September 25, 2017

Board Members Present: Amy Ludwin, Virginia Haviland, Ali Kosiba, Jerry Mullen, Steve McLeod

Board Members Absent: Gary Urban,

Guests: Deb Shelby, J. Ethan Tapper

Clerk: Paula Gervia

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Amy at 6:05pm.

**2. Additions or Deletions to the agenda and Conflict of Interest**

New policy by town for conflict of interest. Similar content from VT Leagues of Cities and Towns.

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes**

Steve made the motion to approve minutes of 6-12-17, Jerry seconded, motion was approved (5-0).

**5. General Business**

- Sue Morse Public Presentation
  - Virginia shared a poster made for the presentation which has been posted throughout town and neighboring towns. Also on radio/TV, Front Porch Forum, Town sites, etc. Richmond also has same presentation around the same time. Feedback will be collected as part of this presentation. Presentation will be Oct 4th at Smilie School.
- Floodplain Outreach and Updates
  - Volunteers have done clearing of vegetation and fixing grade around canoe access. Long term - checking in with residents whose properties have more significant erosion from floodplain.
  - Plan to follow up on individual landowner in floodplain who's responded and is interested in possible contacts w/ Friends of Winooski (FOW) re: spring site plantings.
  - Jason Nerenberg, Stewardship Forester, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation: Is applying for an ERP grant for a Project Design/Feasibility study for restoration of the Preston Brook Floodplain between it crossing under Duxbury Road and entering the Winooski. He visited the site with Gretchen Alexander, DEC River Scientist, to discuss whether removing part of the berms downstream of the bridge would allow the brook to access its historic floodplain

sooner and reduce the sediment load to the Winooski. They are not certain whether the project will be funded, and if so whether the benefit of implementing the design will be worth the cost.

- Bruce Hennessey, who farms in the adjacent fields has reconstructed his fence line adjacent to the new path of Preston brook in the lower portion of the field. This will provide a better buffer to the brook.
  - Jason met with Ann Smith of Friends of the Winooski River, and Katie Kain of US Fish and Wildlife to discuss a riparian planting between the fence and the Winooski in the vicinity of the easternmost crossing of the fence for the Long Trail (not far from the canoe launch). Ann is submitting an ERP application for this project, and the FOW plan to plant in the spring.
  - There is a new director of FOW coming on board soon.
- Budget
    - Questions reviewed: Boy Scout from Richmond working at Preston Pond, would like to replace a bridge (will raise bridge slightly higher, better footings, remove rock and potentially culvert, etc.) and needs some funding for the project. Asking for \$150. Jerry made motion to approve \$150 from budget, Steve seconded and motion passed (5-0).
    - Beaver baffle has been baffled - beaver(s) have mounded up dirt and it is no longer functional. Plan to leave it but doing some engineering to fix it. Would like \$50. Steve made motion to approve \$50, Ali seconded and motion passed (4-0, 1 abstention).
  - Trails Update
    - See below with appointment discussion with Ethan Tapper.
  - Smilie School Friends of Winooski (FOW) Update
    - FOW (Ann) will order plants and arrange for spring planting at Smilie waht will finish the project. Hoping 3/4 grade class will work with project. Grass has come in well. Sloping parts need to be planted.
  - Vice Chair of Conservation Commission
    - Discussion about needing a Vice Chair for the board as all town boards have the protocol in place. Jerry volunteered.
    - Steve made motion to appoint Jerry as Vice Chair, Ali seconded and motion passed (4-0, 1 abstention).
  - Preston Pond Management Plan (PPMP)
    - Amy shared Preston Pond Conservation Area Management Plan document from Selectboard. Addendums as separate items are good idea. Difficult to see what was actually changed from original draft as those changes were not highlighted for review. Would like line on the front of plan - Approved by Bolton Conservation Commission on March 7, 2017 - removed as this draft of plan was not approved by Conservation Commission. This draft is currently a compilation of the Selectboard changes from the original draft. Question raised about decision on trapping and whether it is aligned with conservation easement principles. Preston

Pond has been considered a place known for beaver habitat. Discussion about different perspectives of what people want/see Preston Pond to be. Hunting is allowed there. Encourage everyone to state their comments to the Selectboard at their meeting on Oct 3rd, if they would like to give their input.

## 6. Appointments

- J. Ethan Tapper (6:30), Chittenden County Forester - appt started at 6:50.
  - Mentioned that he is now a landowner in Bolton.
  - Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) spent week fixing Libby's Look Trail and it is looking good. Going to have them work on another trail in next weeks. Will have them work on washed out road/gully to stabilize the road. Covered through a grant the VYCC has. Looks like no logging this winter as management plan may not pass within timeframe. Possible vote by Oct. Wait until management plan vote before making any commitments. Ethan has researched all logging accesses. One access is currently owned by a bank. Ethan can reach out to them to open discussion about access. If logging is available for this winter, it would be a good opportunity. Also looking at boundaries with legal accesses. May need to improve some access sites for logging. Walking access okay, but would need improvements for truck access. Request for map of outlined trails - Ethan has that and can forward to Conservation Commission. Looking into different grants available for public lands. Most trails are in good condition, could fix any trails through logging contracts if damage is done by logging trucks. One trail is very close to the pond so need careful consideration when looking at the stability of that trail. Need to be sure the beaver baffle is working to keep water level stable. Would like to talk with neighboring landowner and collaborate with VAST about thoughts on how to help with the trail. Jerry and Ali will collaborate on this with Ethan. Ethan said one possible eventual objective is to do a new access road on town land so that access becomes less reliant on other landowners.
  - Question about funding for logging process - don't anticipate needing any funding, only perhaps for gravel in landing. Any money needed would need to be requested ahead of time for vote by board. Ethan stated that making trees available for firewood could be easily done as part of a logging operation. The decrease in the logger's share of the trees can be compensated by the other proceeds of the log sale.
  - New wording in draft PPMP about timber harvesting - firewood being sold locally through lottery system. Questions about what this would look like. Upon review of draft, appears that Selectboard will oversee management of this.
  
- Deb Shelby (7:00) to discuss Town Plan to do list - appt started at 7:35
  - Shared thoughts from conference attended called Conservation Summit.

- Shared to-do list re: town plan. Shared view of a management tool for town boards. Idea is to help communication and coordination between town boards. Looking to see if Selectboard will approve this tool. Deb will send screenshot of how tool looks with to-do list.

#### **7. Other Business**

- Next board meeting scheduled for: October 16th, 2017
  - Need consistent schedule - previously it was third Monday every other month. Discussion about meeting every month vs. every other month. Proposal for third Mondays of each month as available.
  - Future meetings: November 27, 2017; January 15, 2018; February 19, 2018; March 19, 2018
  - Dates sent to Town Clerk for general calendar
- Items for next agenda: check in on long term floodplain outreach plan; town management tool with town plan to-do list; PPMP; trails update; forestry update
- Other communication
  - 40th anniversary celebration of VT Land Trust - Oct 1st, 2017
  - Nursery Newsletter - Amy has copy to review
  - Brochure from VT Land Trust - Amy has copy to review

#### **8. Adjournment**

Steve made the motion "to close the meeting", Virginia seconded, no further discussion, all in favor and motion passed (5-0) at 8:03pm.

Attest: Paula Gervia, Clerk Minutes are unofficial until approved.