



**Town of Stowe
Conservation Commission
Monday August 12, 2024
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Conservation Commission was held on Monday August 12, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the Memorial Room of the Stowe Town Office. Members in Attendance: Jacquie Mauer, Phillip Branton, Catherine Gott, Colleen McGovern, Zach Lewis, Kay Barrett, Evan Freund, and Seb Sweatman. Staff in Attendance: Sarah McShane. Others in Attendance: Carolyn Lawrence.

Call to Order- J.Mauer called the meeting to order shortly after 5:30 PM.

Public Comments & Adjustments to the Agenda – No public comments. No adjustments to the agenda.

Review Meeting Minutes [07/22/2024] S.Sweatman requested that the prior meeting minutes be amended to include “began to review” when referring to the Sterling Forest Management Plan. S.McShane made the suggested modification. On a motion by C.McGovern, seconded jointly by P.Branton and K.Barrett, the amended minutes of the prior meeting passed unanimously.

Review Proposal to Install Tool Shed at Cady Hill. C.Lawrence of Stowe Trails Partnership (STP) was present to answer any questions. S.McShane provided an overview of the proposal. She explained that STP would like to install a tool shed near the substation in Cady Hill Forest to provide storage for tools and other trail maintenance equipment. S. McShane explained that the conservation easement allows for the construction/installation of such buildings/structure but includes a provision that it be of “rustic design”. She also mentioned that the ANR Natural Resources Atlas identifies the location of possible Class 2 wetlands/buffers in the general project area and the wetlands would likely need to professionally delineated so they can be avoided. Members discussed the proposal. P.Branton felt the design was rustic and added that STP would avoid installing a shed in a wetland areas to prevent issues with wet soils that are not suitable for the building. Members discussed the character of the surrounding area being a large utility substation with transmission lines. Following discussion, K.Barrett motioned to recommend approval of the proposal upon finding that it is of rustic design and require that the building be placed outside of any delineated wetland or wetland buffer areas. P.Branton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Staff McShane will continue to work with STP on the remaining steps to gain final approval by the Selectboard.

Permeable Pavement & Bear Proof Dumpsters. J.Mauer provided an overview of the topic areas. Members discussed the recent development projects along Mountain Road which involved excess pavement and possible impacts such as stormwater management, increase in temperature, etc. Members discussed opportunities for public education and creating informational posts on front porch forum throughout the year on a variety of conservation related topics. Members discussed posting such information on behalf of the Conservation Commission and compiling educational resources to share. Members agreed to reserve time on the next agenda to brainstorm educational topics and develop a monthly calendar for educational events/posts. Members discussed bearproof dumpsters and the need to increase the educational campaign throughout the year. In the past the Town has not supported the enforcement route but encouraged through education that property owners be Bear Aware. Members discussed potentially sending information letters to businesses but decided it might be more appropriate to communicate with a larger audience (i.e., restaurants, short-term rentals, etc.) Members discussed

potentially hosting another educational event this fall, possibly about flooding/rivers/extreme weather. Members will bring their ideas to the next meeting. Z.Lewis suggested getting the schools involved.

Sterling Forest Management Plan – Review Recommended Amendments. Due to time constraints this discussion item was tabled until the next meeting.

Discuss- Solicit Student Representative for Upcoming School Year. J.Mauer presented J.Lewis with a Certificate of Appreciation and thanked him for his service to the Commission and his community. Members discussed opportunities to work with the school and find another student representative for the upcoming school year.

Mayo Farm- Quiet Path- Riparian Planting. J.Mauer provided a brief update on the possible planting project and noted that she had last heard that the Lamoille County Conservation District was planning on applying for grant funds which could be used for riparian plantings. She will continue to keep the Commission updated on any new information.

Members discussed Mayo Fam, wet areas, and possible options to ‘re-wild’ areas. Members discussed the upcoming Agricultural Lease Agreement and potentially recommending changes to the Selectboard. S.McShane explained that prior Conservation Commissions felt that agriculture should be the primary activity on certain fields and as such designated the fields for agriculture within the management plan. She suggested if the Commission would like to revisit the primary activities and it could consider such changes as part of a management plan amendment process.

Discuss possible meeting with Northeast Wilderness Trust. S.Sweatman presented information to the Commission on the Northeast Wilderness Trust and asked Commission members if a meeting with the organization should be scheduled to discuss Sterling. Members discussed the organization and re-wilding as a management strategy. S.Sweatman suggested that the Commission should hear from additional ecology perspectives and consider identifying areas for old-growth and re-wilding. Members discussed but agreed the Commission has made a good faith effort to involve and consider stakeholder feedback and needs to wrap up the recommended amendments soon.

Friends of the Winooski- Water Quality Testing Project – Distribute Supplies. Water quality sampling supplies were distributed. The last collection is scheduled for next week- August 20th.

General Reports & Updates

None

Other Business

None

Next Meeting Date- 8/26/2024. The meeting adjourned shortly after 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McShane- Planning & Zoning Director