

FAYSTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
August 4, 2020 - Zoom Video Conference
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Lisa Koitzsch, Corrie Miller, Geri Procaccini, Akhil Kaplan, Gene Fialkoff, Ned Kelly

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Corrie moved to approve the minutes from the 7/7/20 meeting; Akhil seconded; all approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No participants.

FAYSTON TOWN FORESTS

BOYCE HILL:

*The Boyce Hill Town Forest Steering Committee (Corrie, Lisa, Chuck Martel (Select Board), and two representatives from the Vermont Land Trust) have reviewed applications for new steering committee members and will be contacting prospective members soon.

*Corrie and Lisa met with the Select Board recently to discuss the long-term management planning process for BHTF and the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee, the FCC and the Vermont Land Trust (VLT).

*The Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) RFP is complete and will be sent out to potential contractors next week.

*The FCC was notified that a Yoga class had been scheduled at the property. The yoga instructor agreed, after being informed of the no-commercial-use policy (as stated in the VLT Conservation Easement), that she would hold the class free of charge. As to the Icelandic Horse Farm request for commercial use in the Interim, the steering committee recommended denying the request until it is able to further review the issue and develop a potential permitting process.

*Akhil noticed someone going to the pond with fishing equipment and informed him that no fishing is allowed in the interim plan. Apparently there has been fish such as Small-mouth Bass brought to the pond. Corrie will be in contact with Andrea Shortsleeve, Vermont Fish and Wildlife biologist to schedule a visit to the property. Lisa said Cory Stephenson, Moretown library director, is planning to take a group of kids to the pond on 8/8/20 to learn about the pond's natural habitat and wildlife.

*Lisa said that Mike Jordan, SB member, has expressed concern about the integrity of the pond's embankment and recently met with a dam specialist for some recommendations. Corrie suggested a work group to remove unwanted growth with hand tools rather than mowers. Lisa will organize a work date for volunteers to participate. Ned noted the dangers of chainsaw use.

*Corrie reiterated the need to consider the importance of the property's natural resources during the long-term planning process.

CHASE BROOK TOWN FOREST:

*Lisa and Ky re-marked the boundary of Chase Brook TF with the Marble Hill Farm (MHF) in preparation for the creation of a dog loop trail. They noted that tree removal by MHF starkly delineated the boundary between the two properties.

*Akhil will organize a workday to establish the dog loop trail.

*Lisa said the SB approved naming the trail "The Fred Gilbert Trail." The FCC should promote the opening of the new trail through FPF postings and Valley Reporter news releases.

KNOTWEED

*Gene found a place on the Mad River where Sumac is growing and is possibly inhibiting the spread of Japanese Knotweed (KW). He would like to investigate further. Corrie said she has found no evidence that Sumac will completely suppress KW.

Gene would like to test soils in that area and at the McCullough Barn to determine a possible connection between soil and KW growth. Corrie mentioned that there could be a variety of possible causes and that he would need a control to compare the results to. Corrie and Lisa agreed that due to the low costs of the tests, Gene should proceed. Ned said Sumac roots can travel over 30 feet.

*Ned has been working with Jito Coleman, Warren Conservation Commission (WCC), and he said the KW shoots can re-root and send rhizomes but continually whacking it down will eventually inhibit growth. Removing roots is more effective but much more time consuming and labor-intensive. Ned and Judi have been on Knotweed patrol on German Flats Road and North Fayston for the past several weeks.

*Corrie reminded everyone to take care removing knotweed so that riprap doesn't get disturbed.

*Lisa thanked Ned and Judi for all the hard work they have put in keeping the Knotweed population down.

*During a recent phone meeting, Jito told Ned and Akhil of the Warren Knotweed attack group he had organized. Akhil offered to film this group during one of their knotweed-removal outings. Akhil will proceed with creating a community "Adopt-a-site" plan, whereby residents can adopt a knotweed site and commit to helping keep it under control, and the film could be used as an educational tool. The WCC also hired a part time employee to help remove knotweed.

*Ned made roadside signs identifying knotweed but feels they're too small to be seen. He will replace them with bigger signs that he'll make once he has the material. Lisa said that Mike Quenneville, Fayston Roadside Mower, should be notified of the location of the signs. Lisa approved funding for material for the signs.

MRV TRAIL MEETING

*Akhil attended the meeting and informed attendees of the FCC plan to create a dog loop trail in the Chase Brook Forest. All were in favor.

*They discussed the importance of proper allocation of funds; scheduling regular workdays for maintenance of trails; and to keep future maintenance in mind when approving the creation of new trails.

*There was a discussion as to how to keep private landowners happy who have given permission to access trails crossing through their properties. Some Kingdom trails were closed off by private landowners due to continual abuses by users. Maybe a stipend or some benefit such as a tax deduction could be offered to landowners as an incentive to keep trails open.

*Akhil said there is a plan in place for a trail connector through land donated by the Featherbed Inn owners.

COMPOSTING

* Geri reported that the first meeting of the Valley Community Compost Group, held at the Lareau Farm Pavilion, was successful. There were 6 attendees including reps from Warren, Waitsfield and Fayston Conservation Commissions.

*Gene agreed to contact Karl Hammer of Vermont Compost about attending a future meeting as a speaker.

*George Schenk contacted Lisa Ransom of Grow Compost and she will be attending the next meeting on August 18th at 4PM to talk about permitting and ANR regulations for community compost.

*Eric Brattstrom will contact other Vermont communities who have compost facilities and give a report at our next meeting

*George has offered his farm as the location of a pilot program for the community compost.

*Geri has researched grant money and found a possible source from the Community resilience Organization (CROs). She submitted an application to Mindy Blank, the director, for the maximum amount of \$2,500.00 and is waiting to hear from her as to whether it has been approved.

The next FCC meeting will be held virtually through Zoom September 1, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Geri Procaccini, Secretary