
Fayston Conservation Commission Meeting

Tuesday, 12/01/2020, 6:00 pm by Zoom

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

Action Items prior to next meeting:

***Geri:** Compose a draft document with bullet points including composting locations, services and times in and around the Mad River Valley to be posted on FPF, Fayston Town Website and the Valley Reporter.

***Everyone:** Read the compost proposal from Transform Vermont Compost connection (link below); please email Geri with any thoughts, ideas or comments.

***Lisa:** Invite Carol Chamberlin and Doug Day of the Fayston Planning Commission to attend the FCC January meeting.

***Akhil and Geri:** Meet with Jito Coleman to develop a spreadsheet siting knotweed areas in the Valley, and listing community members interested in volunteering.

Approval of Minutes:

Corrie approved the minutes from the September 1, 2020 meeting; Lisa seconded, all approved.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Community Composting:

1. Geri had a phone meeting with Shawn Pontbriand, co-owner with his wife of Transform Vermont Compost Connection. Shawn is very interested in working with the FCC to establish a compost pick-up service where he will provide and exchange animal-secure 5-gallon compost buckets. Residents will exchange their full buckets once a week, at a site to be determined, for a cleaned empty bucket.
2. Shawn emailed a proposal to Geri and she will forward it to the FCC. Below is the link to their website.

<https://www.transformvermontcompostconnection.com/>

3. Lisa suggested we start small (just Fayston?) as a pilot program, expanding if and when the program becomes successful. Corrie and Lisa mentioned that two issues of concern are finding the right dropoff/pickup site, and how the accounting process will work.

Forests, Wildlife, & Communities:

1. Corrie said the conversation is ongoing and she plans on continuing to share information with Phil Huffman - Chair of the Waitsfield Conservation Commission, and Jito Coleman - Chair of the Warren Conservation Commission. Waitsfield and Warren are working on integrating Act 171 requirements as part of their town planning work but Fayston does not need to do this yet.
2. Lisa and Corrie suggested that all FCC members become familiar with the planning process and land use regulations, and suggested that attending meetings as a listener is a good place to start.

Trail proposal: Phen Basin to Hemlock Hill

1. Akhil, as the Commission's 'rec rep,' has been in contact with John Atkinson of the Mad River Riders and will arrange to meet him to walk the trail, post-hunting season. He also contacted the state regarding information on the land that will be affected by the trail installation but hasn't heard back. Akhil will send maps of the area to all FCC members, and expressed the value of physically walking the land.
2. Corrie mentioned that other interested parties, including a few Friends of the Mad River Board members have been researching the area as well so they can learn more about the proposed trail. She suggested organizing a meeting to share information.
3. Akhil, Lisa and Corrie all expressed serious concern about the intrusion the trail may have on critical wildlife habitat, core forest habitat and the area's natural resources.

Boyce Hill Town Forest

1. Lisa thanked Ned and Judy, along with Woody Dugan (Boyce Hill Town Forest steering committee member) for removing some vegetation on the pond embankment to protect its integrity over the long term.
2. Lisa said that the town has installed more parking spots to try to help solve the issue of users blocking the town plow turn-around.
3. Lisa reported that the Steering Committee is working on the public comment process and a communications strategy.

2020 Fayston Town Plan

Possible projects for FCC members that would support the vision outlined in the 2020 Fayston Town Plan:

1. Invasive species
 - a. Prevention and elimination of invasive species - continuation of knotweed removal.

- b. Increase volunteer participation. Ned mentioned that Bruce Sinnott, local resident who has been very helpful with past projects, offered to adopt a knotweed site near his property.
 - c. Lisa asked Geri to create a spreadsheet listing residents who have offered their assistance, or have helped with past projects and a listing of knotweed removal sites. Akhil, Lisa and Corrie all use and value the I-Naturalist program.
 - d. Akhil will contact Jito Coleman to obtain his comprehensive list of knotweed sites in the Valley. He will also work with Jito on the “adopt-a-knotweed-patch” program, with a target roll-out date sometime in April 2021.
2. Corrie stressed the need to educate voters on the value of protecting shared resources, like clean water, viewsheds, wildlife habitat, and so on. She also stressed the importance of education for prevention of potentially destructive acts such as cutting riparian buffers or burning brush piles, noting that many people don’t understand their value.
 3. Lisa requested FCC members read/study the Town Land Use Regulations and Geri asked about the input and/or influence the FCC has on future development.
 4. Akhil suggested asking the DRB what regulations the FCC can support to maintain conservation best practices.
 5. Lisa will invite Carol Chamberlin, former FCC Chair, and Doug Day, Planning Commission members, to attend our next meeting to provide insight as to how the FCC can best support town planning and regulations.

Budget

1. The FCC budget request needs to be submitted to the Selectboard by 12/8/20. The FCC has 3 budget items: the Fayston Conservation Reserve Fund (FCRF); the Conservation Commission expense fund, and the Fayston Town Forest Reserve Fund.
2. Lisa and Corrie noted that the FCC used part of its annual budget of \$1,000 for the Natural Resources Inventory at Boyce Hill Town Forest. If not used by the end of 2020, the budget item expires. It is hoped that the SB will again approve \$1,000 for 2021.
3. After some discussion , Lisa will request the same amount as was approved last year for the FCRF - \$3,500.

Other Business

1. Ned noticed signs of Powder Post Beetle damage to the McCullough Barn. He requested that we address this issue as soon as possible due to possible severe structural damage. Corrie suggested, in addition to FCC research on eradication, that the CC be sure to make the Select Board aware of this potential budget item.
2. Ned noticed new damage to the beaver baffle on Randell Road, and Lisa offered to contact state authorities to make them aware and get advice/assistance.



Next Meeting: January 5, 2020 at 6PM via Zoom