

Fayston Conservation Commission

MINUTES

February 23, 2023

Present via Zoom: Akhil Kaplan, Patty Pasley, Lisa Koitzsch, Amy Dalton, and Andrea Henderson

1. No quorum from January meeting so unable to approve the minutes. This item will be moved to the agenda in March.
2. CC members welcomed new member Amy Dalton, and new subcommittee member Andrea Henderson.
3. Brief Updates
 - a. General

Lisa is working on a summary of FCC projects and on setting up a Google Drive folder for the FCC on the Town account.
 - b. Conservation and Recreation Visioning
 - Lisa and Akhil provided a summary of the project and noted a recent article in the Valley Reporter.
 - Ross Saxton will be leaving the Steering Committee at the end of March as he has resigned from the Mad River Path.
 - c. Phen Basin
 - Bob Kogut, Chair of the Mad River Riders, wrote a letter to the Editor of the Valley Reporter stating there is no current interest in building any new mountain bike trails in Phen Basin.
 - FCC will focus on continued communication with the State of Vermont and the Vermont Land Trust on easement protections.
 - d. Boyce Hill
 - Management consultant has completed the first draft of the long-term management plan for the Steering Committee to review. After that, the draft will be sent to the Vermont Land Trust for their approval. A public hearing will be scheduled sometime in April or May. The Select Board will have the final review/approval of the plan.
 - Once the plan is completed, the Steering Committee will be disbanded, and a Stewardship Committee will be formed. Governance will be by the Stewardship Committee and the FCC.
 - Biggest complaint this winter has been excess dog waste left on the trail. There is a plan to have a dog waste bag dispenser at the trailhead but not clear if there will be a trash container. Andrea noted that a trash container at Chase

Brook was very useful. Lisa suggested the FCC could purchase a container for Chase Brook since the one used last year belonged to Patty.

e. Wildlife Corridors

- The event at the Big Picture sponsored by the tri-town conservation commissions was well attended. Jens Hilke, VT Fish & Wildlife, Lisa Sausville, VT Coverts, and Jito Coleman, Warren Conservation Commission, presented.
- FCC will be moving forward with data analysis on Fayston wildlife corridors this summer. The long-term goal will be to work with the Planning Commission to ensure the town's land use regulations incorporate wildlife habitat and corridor protection. MRVTV recorded the presentation.

f. MRV Bear Initiative

Lisa provided a summary of the Initiative and some of their projects.

- The Initiative is currently running a bear story contest and the deadline is March 12. Local libraries will be sponsoring an open mic night for bear stories on April 7th.
- Local libraries now have "Critter Gitters" available for rent. These are noise devices to deter bears.
- On Saturday, April 15, at 3:00 PM, Ben Kilham of the Kilham Bear Center in Lyme, NH, will present his work with bears and orphaned bear cubs.
- There are several events during the summer and fall where the Initiative will have a table with educational materials including the Farmer's Market, Earth Day at Sugarbush, and Green and Gold Weekend at Mad River.
- Work on the Chamber of Commerce website bear page will continue as there are still a lot of gaps.
- Patty reminded everyone that trash at the Battleground was an issue during Green Up day clean up last year. Amy has a friend who is on the Board of the Battleground, and she will mention this issue to her. Lisa said the Initiative is hoping to work with condo associations on trash/compost issues.

4. Knotweed Project

- a. Andrea, Patty, and Akhil will work as a subcommittee on Knotweed. Lisa will participate as needed.
- b. Waitsfield and Warren have been interviewing interns for next summer. Once the interns have been hired, Fayston will work with the other two towns to divide work priorities.
- c. The main priority for Fayston is an inventory of knotweed. Once this has been completed, we will then prioritize management sites for our pilot project. Chase

Brook will likely be our most visible site and Patty worked last summer to 'smother' a large patch of knotweed near the parking area.

- d. Andrea worked with Waitsfield last summer on their knotweed project.
 - e. The Knotweed Subcommittee will meet Monday, March 13 at 8:30 AM at Three Mountain Café.
5. Regular Meeting Schedule – All agreed on trying to keep a regularly scheduled meeting on the 4th Wednesday of every month. Next meeting will be **March 22nd at 6:30 PM**. April meeting will be on the 26th.
 6. Tri-Town CC Meeting – Bruno Grimaldi, Waitsfield CC, is organizing the next tri-town CC meeting. Date to be decided.
 7. Other Business
 - a. McCullough Barn
 - Patty talked to Kevin Streeter and the barn floor is on his schedule for April.
 - Jess Knoop approached the town again about using the barn for a nature education camp the weeks of June 19th and 26th. All agreed that if the organization is a non-profit, there will be no rental charge but if it is a for-profit organization, the usual \$100 fee will be applied. The group should sign a release form, provide a COI, and rent porta-lets.
 - Pest treatment for powder post beetles will be scheduled for late spring. Keeping the grass short around the base of the barn has helped.
 - b. Green Up Day – Saturday, May 6th. Patty and Andrea will be leading the charge and hope to coordinate with other Valley towns. Akhil will check with Megan McDonough, Harwood Co-Principal, about involving Harwood students on Green Up Day and contact the Fayston school.