

Fayston Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2023, 6:00 - 7:20 pm
Fayston Municipal Office

Members Present: Patty Pasley, Andrea Henderson, Amy Dalton, Pete Colgan, Woody Dugan

Members Present via Zoom: None

Members Absent: Corrie Miller

Public/Guests: Brian Litmans, FCC candidate

Martha Veselka, Fayston Tree Warden, Guest Speaker

1. Minutes approved

Pete moved to approve minutes from August 30, 2023. Woody seconded. No further discussion/comments. All voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Note: Minutes & agenda to be shared via Google Docs so all can add/revise/etc.

2. No public input of note

3. Personnel: New Member Candidate: Brian Litmans

a. Introductions made by all FCC members

b. Brian Litmans provided background on his experiences in public interest law, nonprofit work, recreational interests and his interest in being part of decisions that are important to the community of Fayston.

c. Patty reviewed the current projects being undertaken by the FCC and asked if Brian had any priorities beyond the current projects. Brian expressed the need to better understand the issues before commenting.

d. Pete would like to see greater cooperation/communication between other FCCs & related working groups in the Valley. Strengthening relationships Valley-wide is a goal for Patty as well.

e. Brian expressed having time to devote to FCC projects as well as having much experience with facilitation, strategic planning and nonprofit governance. Pete mentioned that these skills could be valuable to establishing a Friends of Boyce Hill organization in the future.

f. Executive Session called by Patty to discuss Brian's appointment to the FCC. Andrea stated that Brian would be a tremendous asset. Pete agreed. Andrea moved to approve Brian's appointment. Patty seconded. All voted in favor. Andrea will notify Patti Lewis about adding Brian to the Selectboard agenda on 10/10/23.

4. 2024 Budget Planning

a. Patty would like to get started with preparing the 2024 budget in accordance with the November budget process. Andrea mentioned that this was discussed at the Selectboard meeting re: Boyce. Corrie will help with this process. \$5k in

ARPA funds (not a recurring funding source) was allocated to the Knotweed program. The FCC considers this a priority and would like to approach the Selectboard for sustained, matching funds. Woody mentioned that the map created by Andrea will provide compelling evidence for continued support with the KW management efforts.

b. Patty stated that we will need to provide a write-up on FCC 2023 activities for the town report. Patty will follow up with a due date.

c. Patty would like members to think about what projects we'd like to advance in 2024: New projects? Continued work on existing work? Wildlife Corridor work? Green Up day will continue with the addition of Warren. Chase Brook may be the site of a pollinator garden/interpretive nature trail in conjunction with the Vermont Master Naturalist program participation. Chase Brook Management Plan is overdue and needs to be updated (Amy). Bear Initiative work will continue. A Boyce Hill stewardship committee will be assembled. Woody has letters of interest and mentioned that the Selectboard would like to have input in this process.

d. Pete stated that there is a \$15k reserve fund for town forests. Jared would like to see a Boyce specific carve out for BH for mowing/maintenance. Woody stated that the costs are unknown for BH at this point, hence the need for a stewardship committee.

e. Andrea recommends that we prepare a draft budget on or before the October 25 FCC meeting in order to be ready for the November submission. Woody mentioned that the Forest Reserve Fund is largely endowed by other donations. Andrea reported this budget to be \$28k.

5. Project Updates

a. Project summaries were submitted in writing prior to the FCC meeting. Andrea had a call with Fayston School PTO member, Deb Powers. They discussed the [Bee the Change](#) project with the goal of establishing a corridor from Chase Brook to the Fayston School playground. Patty will contact Mike with Bee the Change for more information on a prospective project.

b. Pete would like to see highschool students engage with the Boyce Hill ecosystem to observe and track changes. Bernd Heinrich could be an advocate for this effort.

c. Andrea reached out to Katrina Derrick with GMVS about student volunteerism connected to FCC projects. Woody will follow up with Kat. He also mentioned reaching out to John Kerrigan, head X-country coach for Harwood. Amy mentioned pursuing a workaround to liability issues raised by the town

when a Harwood intern wanted service hours related to knotweed management over the summer but was denied.

- d. FCC members agreed to purchasing a Serviceberry tree for \$189 to be planted at the Chase Brook barn in honor of Lisa Koitzsch, former FCC member
- d. Amy and Pete will monitor FCC email

5. Upcoming events

- a. Oct 18: Lisa's retirement party at Amy and Brian's, 5:30-7:30p
- b. Oct 19: Ecological Forest Management at Big Picture, 6:30-8:00p
- c. Semi-annual tri-town gathering: Andrea will be meeting with Curt to discuss further. She mentioned that this gathering can happen every 6 months but annual meetings suffice. Members agreed to schedule this for Spring 2024.

6. Guest speaker: Martha Veselka, Fayston Tree Warden

- a. Martha discussed preparing a Shade Tree Preservation Plan and an Emerald Ash Borer plan
- d. FCC members identified the need to better understand the role of Tree Warden and whether or not a preservation plan is appropriate for Fayston