

Plainfield Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes 20 May 2013

Present: Sarah Albert, Becky Buchanan, Charlie Cogbill, Jonathan Decker, Kate Harper, Jan Waterman
Absent: Julie Hackbarth

We bid Jonathan farewell and the best of luck; this is his last meeting as a member of the commission, although we hope he will continue his involvement in other ways.

Minutes: Minutes from April meeting approved.

Town Plan: Will Colgan indicated that the final draft was approved by the Planning Commission and will be distributed soon. A date for public hearing hasn't been set.

Town Forest Trails: Sarah just received a detailed report from Luke O'Brien re: his May 3 town forest trails consultation. She forwarded it to the rest of the commissioners late this afternoon and brought copies for us to review. After looking over the report, we considered next steps, including perhaps hiring the Northwoods Stewardship Center to construct the trail system, and possible funding mechanisms for that work – grant opportunities and perhaps timber sales. Sarah will ask county forester Russ Barrett to come and review options for harvesting, and clearing certain areas to create scenic viewpoints. She'll also review billing with Luke. We'll continue discussion at our next meeting.

Tree and Shrub Sale: Sarah presented the final figures: \$692.36 each to Marshfield and Plainfield conservation commissions. Discussed whether or not to continue this event; next year it's our turn to organize. Consensus was to continue; it's a good event. We don't know yet if Marshfield will be involved next year; Sarah will check with them. Next year we'd like to add nut trees to the offerings ("Everything from fruit to nuts!") and continue the emphasis on plants for food. Big thanks to Sarah for all her work on this event, and her continued innovations to improve the way it's organized.

Green Up: Went well. Front Porch Forum postings about the event seemed to increase participation. Thank you, Jonathan and Becky, for coordinating. Jonathan will check with Linda and Mike Nolan for feedback, and will send the final report to Green Up Vermont. Special thanks to Lucy Blue for sorting out lots of recyclables. Becky will discuss the with the Green Up Vermont board encouraging volunteers to sort and recycle what they collect; any funds from bottle returns, etc. could be donated back to the organization. Thanks also to Allen Soule for donating his time and truck to help out, and big thanks to Mike Russell for again donating his trailer for the collection and for transporting the bags to the dump for us.

AVCC Tiny Grants: Applications due by June 15; funding from \$250 - \$600 available. We discussed and voted to apply for funds to hire Luke O'Brien to help us prepare an application for a large Trails and Recreation grant (up to \$20,000 available) to fund trail construction in town forest. Sarah will put together a first draft and circulate it.

Jonathan will check with Brett about the cost of a significant natural communities survey, and with Jens about the Municipal Planning grant.

Flood Resiliency Presentation: June 13, 7 p.m., at municipal building, Dan Currier, CVRPC. Conservation commissioners, among others, are invited.

Route 2 Rest Area Planting: In August, in response to his request, we voted to offer Doug Metcalf up to \$50 to buy plants to enhance his father's memorial at the rest area. We also offered him mulch, which we have on hand, and transportation to buy the plants and haul the mulch. Jan will check with Doug and renew the offer to see if he is still interested. She'll suggest that if he is, he might purchase plants from the Cutler Library plant sale fundraiser.

Kiosk: Sarah, on the kiosk committee, says the target date for set-up is mid-June. It will have eight 30" x 48" panels. One will be devoted to town notices, and one to recreation opportunities. Sarah asked for input on that

panel, specifically town forest information and maps. Other panels will go towards education, businesses, history and community services, transportation, and two panels will serve as a public bulletin board. Noted Loona Brogan's planned celebration of kiosk, farmer's market, solstice, and installation of new little library, coupled with a history walk in the village on June 21st.

Pet waste bag and rain garden signs are both rotted and have fallen down. Kate will ask Linda who is responsible for upkeep of signs. There were also some comments about the problem with pet owners who simply refuse to pick up their dogs' messes in the village, park and Rec Field.

Street Trees: Discussed Ben Koenig's talk with Sarah concerning the big tree in front of the bookstore. It's half dead and needs to come down. He'd like to replace it; Sarah will send him information about resources our Street Trees program can offer. Further discussion revolved around Green Mt. Power road crews' practice of removing trees with no notice to or discussion with owners of property on which trees stand. The town has a policy regarding removal or trimming of trees in public right of way; decisions need to go through the Selectboard and the Tree Warden. It seems there's a need to raise awareness about this. Sarah will put together a short memo addressing this issue, Becky will post it on the town website, Jan will post it on Front Porch Forum and send to WEC and GMP.

New members needed on the conservation commission. With Jonathan leaving, and Sarah O's resignation in January, we have two seats open. We tried to brainstorm a list of prospects we could approach. Jan will ask Rose Paul. Others -- ?

Next meeting: June 19, 2013 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jan Waterman, Secretary
Plainfield Conservation Commission