

Plainfield Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes 18 December 2013

Present: Sarah Albert, Becky Buchanan, Charlie Cogbill, Becky Cushing, Julie Hackbarth, Kate Harper, Jan Waterman

Guest: Jackie Cassino, CVRPC Forest Stewardship Project

Minutes: Minutes from November approved.

Pilot Education program: Becky C. reported on this workshop she attended Tuesday, 17th Dec. Sponsored by ANR and Fish and Wildlife, the program is designed to help members of conservation commissions become more knowledgeable and effective. Lots of information was presented about natural resources, a lesson on using the BioFinder resource; stronger strategies and implementation tools would make it a better program.

Forest Stewardship project: The state has identified the need to ensure habitat connectivity; healthy, intact forests; and landscape-based forest stewardship. Jackie came with a power point presentation about this (new to our area) effort, coordinated across the state by the regional planning commissions. The goal is to increase the scale and pace of sustainable management of private forest lands in Vermont. After the presentation, she asked for our input re: concerns specific to the Marshfield/Plainfield area which need to be addressed to reach that goal, and keep our forests as forests, healthy and connected. Jackie also asked us to examine maps of Plainfield they have generated, in order to contribute any information we could about the forests in town. She noted our comments, and will have them incorporated into the CVRPC database. She requested our help in increasing public engagement, and asked us to help make contact with land owners in town who have conservation easements, have trail systems, etc.

Town Forest: Sarah, Becky C., Doug Morin, and Allen Clark accompanied Mike Scott, Redstart, on a walk on Dec. 14, at which time Mike assessed the forest in order to prepare a silviculture/forest management plan. He sent the plan to Sarah who circulated it for us to review before the meeting. He also offered to go out with another Redstart forester to mark trees for cutting next Monday, Dec. 23. We discussed the matter, including need to address clearly how the money from timber harvest will be used. Cutting will probably happen next September. Sarah has committed to seeing this project through. We voted unanimously to accept the forest management plan set forth by Redstart, and to authorize them to mark trees for the next harvest.

The recreation trails grant we submitted was not funded this time. They encouraged us to resubmit for the next round, in February. They also gave us suggestions of ways to enhance our application. Sarah asked us if she should continue, even though the funds that would be awarded in February wouldn't be available until 2015. Consensus was that she should.

Major thanks to Sarah for all her work on this grant application and the whole town forest project.

Town Plan: We briefly discussed the latest additions to the plan, having to do with newly assigned responsibilities and priorities. Any individual concerns, etc. about the latest draft should be submitted directly to the Selectboard.

Next meeting: January 15, 2014 at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jan Waterman, Secretary
Plainfield Conservation Commission