

**Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Adamant Community Club**  
**Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 7:00 pm**

**Present:** Stephanie Kaplan, Larry Bush, Neal Maker, Pat Johnson

**Absent:** Drew Lamb, Julie Hand

**Guests:** Katie Lane-Karnas (recording minutes)

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm.
2. Agenda revisions or additions: The Chair listed two additions to the agenda: tree warden statute considerations and rewriting the Conservation Fund guidelines.
3. Approve minutes: Larry Bush made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2018 meeting, with edits as noted; Neal Maker seconded. The motion passed 4-0.
4. Conservation Fund Balance: The Commission requested Katie to email the Town Treasurer for the Conservation Fund balance in advance of each month's meeting.
5. Town Plan Action Items: This item was tabled until a subsequent meeting.
6. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): The Chair shared that the Urban & Community Forestry Program has a great deal of material on their website about what municipalities can do about the EAB, including recommending an EAB working group for each town. The Commission discussed sponsoring an education session jointly with the Selectboard. Neal commented that the Vermont Invasives group offers information and support, and that although it is harder to identify an ash tree without leaves in winter, it is still reasonably possible. They discussed communication for Calais residents to learn about identifying ash trees on individual properties, deciding if treatment is desired, treating with insecticides and allowing small trees to grow. Montpelier's inventory of roadside ash trees, identifying the important ones, and treating those trees with insecticides was considered. They discussed Joanne Garton (VT Urban and Community Forestry Program)'s roadside vegetation inventory for Calais which includes a rough map of ash tree locations.

Neal explained that EAB larvae are eating the sap inside of the bark during winter from approx. October-April; as adults, they emerge in spring and fly from approx. June- September. He described a systemic insecticide injection that is fairly effective in saving the treated trees. The Commission decided to work with the Selectboard and Urban & Community Forestry program toward a late May 2019 community outreach effort.

Neal, in his position of Town Tree Warden, reported that some Calais residents are felling their valuable ash trees because of EAB. He suggests that landowners not cut down all of them because there may be some that are resistant to the EAB, and also they may not harm some smaller ash trees. He clarified that you can work to slow the spread of EAB, but they cannot be stopped.

7. Forest Habitat Blocks: The Commission discussed next steps on the Forest Habitat Blocks work; Larry will follow up with a contact from the State for moving forward.
8. Update on proposed shoreland zoning revisions: Larry communicated topics covered at a meeting in Adamant concerning the village district boundaries and the relationship to the proposed Calais shoreland zoning revisions. The meeting conclusion was that the current village district location needs to be shortened on one end; discussion included whether the district should cross the roadway as proposed by the Planning Commission. This raised a question of whether the village should be subject to the same town standards as other shoreland areas of Calais.

The Chair met with the Planning Commission Chair and reviewed questions and concerns; she reported that the Planning Commission is in the eighth draft of the proposed revisions, and will get in touch when they have a final proposal. The Planning Commission may convene public meetings in other villages that have ponds to discuss the shoreland and village district boundaries.

The Chair discussed the increased efforts from the state in protecting waterways. In clarifying state versus town zoning around shorelines, she stated that the state law requires a 250-foot buffer that ends if interrupted by a roadway; Calais' proposed shoreland zoning is proposing the same 250 feet of shoreland district around most ponds, but without interruption due to roadways. They discussed nuances regarding mowing down to the edges of the ponds and streams and citizen input for creating policies that are implemented town-wide.

9. Fox and coyote hunting: The Chair reported that there was a meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Board this same evening, where any action on the petition to restrict fox and coyote hunting was postponed. The Commission discussed the connection between a strong fox population and a decrease in Lyme Disease. Pat voiced concerns around the possible political motivation of permitting fox hunting, which is in opposition to healthy environmental and ecological management and scientific research. The Commission shared back-

ground on former member Richard Maizell's communication with town resident Louis Porter (the appointed Fish and Wildlife Commissioner) and his unwillingness to oppose fox and coyote hunting. Pat suggested communicating with other towns' conservation commissions regarding advocating for an end to fox hunting; the Commission was in support and asked her to draft a letter.

10. Tree Warden Statute: There were amendments proposed in the last legislative session to the Vermont statute regarding tree wardens, but they didn't pass. The Commission plans to study the statute and the proposed revisions to it; towns can write their own ordinances, and they discussed how this would allow for much more detailed and thorough language and definitions. Calais' tree warden, Neal, stated that he would like to see an ordinance for Calais, and the Chair concurred. They reviewed an extensive list of the benefits of a tree ordinance to a town. The Chair and Neal are going to meet to discuss a possible tree ordinance for Calais.
11. Conservation Fund Guidelines: The Commission decided to begin the review, editing and re-organization of the guidelines at a subsequent meeting. They updated a new Commission member on the process that had been followed with several projects that received money from the Conservation Fund and their concerns about it.
12. Other Business: The Commission reported that Rob Lamb is out of state and Julie Hand was not able to attend. The Chair reported that the environmental education "Four Winds" program at Calais Elementary School still needs volunteers, and commented on the excellent nature of the content, training and classroom work.

The Fall Foliage Walk was great with a strong turnout, including people of all ages, dogs and even a pony. The Commission commended Neal for doing a wonderful job.

The Commission discussed possible new commission member leads and possible return dates for members currently unavailable/out of town.

13. Public Comment: None.
14. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Date: 10/24/2018 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas  
*Approved by the Conservation Commission at the 1/15/2019 meeting*