

**Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Calais Town Office**  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2019, 7:00 pm**

**Present:** Stephanie Kaplan, Larry Bush, Neal Maker, Julie Hand, Pat Johnson, Mark Brown

**Absent:** Drew Lamb

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

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:25 pm.
2. Agenda revisions or additions: None.
3. Approve minutes: Mark Brown moved and Julie Hand seconded to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2020 meeting, as edited. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Conservation Fund Balance: The current balance is \$69,846.31.
5. Organizational Meeting: Larry Bush made a motion to nominate Stephanie Kaplan as chair; Pat Johnson seconded and the motion passed 5-1. Stephanie Kaplan made a motion to nominate Larry Bush as vice chair. Pat Johnson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
6. Town Meeting & Conservation Fund: Article 17 passed at Town Meeting, after Stephanie's explanation and answering a few questions. The Fund guidelines can now be worked on and the Commission can come to agreement defining the parameters of "historic."
7. EAB Planning: There were not many questions about EAB at Town Meeting, and very few handouts were taken. Pat will post information for residents to Front Porch Forum. One resident raised a question after the meeting: what is the legal quarantine for ash trees? Neal (Tree Warden) explained that ash cannot be moved out of Vermont into states without a legal quarantine; in side of Vermont, an unofficial quarantine is strongly recommended by local regions, during flight season, but it is not legally binding. Mills and firewood loggers should be attending to maps that show EAB infected areas and responding accordingly. Firewood shouldn't leave an [infected area](#).

The group reviewed "This is an Ash Tree" labels that can be laminated to post a corridor of ash trees for public identification and information. Pat will continue to pursue work on the tags along with green flagging. The work of posting the corridor will occur after snowbanks have melted, in April. The group identified locations to leave EAB informational handouts.

The Commission reviewed East Hill Tree Farm's bare roots catalog. Stephanie will get the exact grant money amount that is available to Neal, who will learn more from the Tree Farm (chestnuts, walnuts, oaks, mountain ash, locusts, lilacs; also, price for planting). Neal will also check into planting at and behind the Town Hall.

The Commission considered talking with the Selectboard about creation of a reserve fund for future ash tree removal expenses. Stephanie noted that another town did approve such a fund at their town meeting. Conversation moved to the approach to handling ash trees that may fall near the road. The Commission will work on a document that communicates the inventory and research work done and planning outcome. A major takeaway of the mapping is that there are ash trees *everywhere*—the EAB fallout will impact nearly everywhere in Calais.

The April meeting will be to tag trees as planned; the meeting following will be in May. Trees purchased with the grant monies will be planted in the spring or the fall.

8. Memorial Hall: The North Calais Memorial Hall Association (NCMHA) communicated with one Conservation Commission member about serving on their advisory committee, a condition for receipt of Conservation Funds as defined in their letter from the Calais Selectboard. They have apparently already put together their management plan before having convened the advisory committee defined in the letter for creating such plan. The Chair will contact the NCMHA on behalf of the Conservation Commission.
9. Bliss Pond Town Forest: Larry led conversation about how to create ideas or formats for going forward this year, ultimately designing plans to enable any Town Meeting questions to happen for March 2021. A public informational/feedback meeting may involve Dan Singleton, Eric Sorenson, or a person with a scientific understanding about old growth forest being qualitatively different than other forest, and a significant factor of addressing climate change. A potential date of Saturday June 13 in the Town Hall, with a panel discussion and food, was tentatively considered.

The townspeople have a say in the Town Forest; the Commission perhaps bears responsibility for making a recommendation to formalize a policy around the Forest. The group considered implications that may trigger a vote, rather than done as part of Town policy. Currently, nothing would prevent the Town from doing whatever it wants with the Town Forest. Therefore, if in favor of old growth forest, the Town would need to pursue a

conservation easement to ensure the future of the Forest. This topic will be discussed further at the May meeting.

10. Other Business: The Chair noted that the Conservation Commission will meet with the Planning Commission next Tuesday, March 17 at 7 pm, with the opportunity to discuss the comments shared about the draft shoreland zoning regulations.

Denise Wheeler called in to announce that the Selectboard nominated the Calais Conservation Commission to the State Tree Stewards Awards program, for their excellent work on EAB planning. She thanked the Commission for their commitment.

11. Public comment: None.

12. Adjournment: Stephanie Kaplan motioned to adjourn at 9:20 pm; Mark Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Date: 3/11/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas  
*Approved by the Conservation Commission at the 5/13/2019 meeting*