

**Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Calais Town Office**  
**Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 7:00 pm**

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

**Guests:** Katie Lane-Karnas (recording minutes), Scott Bassage

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7 pm.
2. Agenda revisions or additions: None.
3. Approve Minutes: Neal Maker made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2019 and January 14, 2020 meetings, with edits as noted. Drew Lamb seconded, and the motion passed 7-0.
4. Conservation Fund Balance: The Fund balance is currently \$69,846.31. The group noted that the North Calais Memorial Hall Association will not receive the awarded conservation funds (\$50,000) until they fulfill the conditions laid out in their letter from the Selectboard, including that they create a committee with membership from the Conservation Commission.
5. EAB Planning: The Commission [met with the Selectboard](#) to provide an update on EAB planning. The Board had asked the Commission to take their inventory-created map and travel the roadways to identify a specific number of trees that should be prioritized for removal, and allow the Town to determine if the scope of the project is attainable within the current road crew schedule. The direction of lean and diameter of the tree may be set as criteria for defining “most hazardous” trees. The “Game of Logging” safe logging program was discussed at the Selectboard meeting and this evening’s meeting. Loggers attending the program have workers’ comp premiums decrease by 15%. The Commission agreed that it’s up to the Selectboard, and not this Commission, to figure out if the road crew should have training in safe methods of cutting trees and, if so, to set it up.

Future discussions will include consideration of a volunteer-run firewood “wood bank” for low-income town residents, There would possibly be a central location where logs could be left. Over some period of time, people could split and use it as firewood. The effort may be coordinated by volunteers, schedule work weekends, as is done in other towns. The town attorney may need to be consulted regarding liability.

The group discussed spending EAB grant monies at a nursery in springtime ahead of tree plantings. Neal will look into it.

The Commission discussed whether the town has any ash trees worth saving by treatment with insecticide. The inventory shows a number of big ash trees at the top of Lightening Ridge: one on Gray and one on Tucker Road at the 24” diameter range (none in Calais

inventory were recorded wider than 24”), and also near the intersection of Dugar Brook Road and the North Calais Road.

**Action for Town Meeting:**

- *Write a new handout for Town Meeting:* possibly a summary of the results of the inventory, such as the number of miles of roadway inventoried, number of trees, description of the inventory work and how the Conservation Commission is using the info to identify the most hazardous ash trees for prioritizing what needs to be cut, flagging identification, outline the process for landowner notification and public hearing. If a person has ash trees on their own land, they should contact a forester. \*Include picture(s). \* **Pat**
  - *Consider the flagging* to share a visual?
  - *Find printing costs* and timelines from Capitol Copy. **Pat**
  - *Prepare information for a verbal presentation* at Town Meeting: explain/introduce the problem, articulate the twofold action (hazard tree identification and public awareness ash tree identification corridor), ask people to contact the Commission if they have an “historic” or special ash tree in the right of way which may be considered for treatment. **Stephanie**
  - *Contact Town Clerk* about securing a table and the Moderator about discussion **Stephanie**
  - *Prepare discussion points about supporting a woodchipper proposed in-* Article 8 **Stephanie**
  - *Urban and Community Forestry Program:* call Joanne Garton if more handouts are needed. **Pat, Drew**
6. Shoreland Zoning: The Commission discussed the draft letter and the comments the Chair made directly on the draft proposed shoreland zoning, based on the last conversation among the Conservation Commission. March 17 at 7 pm will be a joint meeting of the Planning and Conservation Commissions and the Calais Lakes & Streams Committee at the town office. The Commission appreciated the fine tooth comb editing the Chair has done in preparing written comments. The associated letter expresses the larger concern about vague language and the issue of mowing. The letter shares a website with information on planning of buffer areas including planned, aesthetically pleasing, landscaped buffers (buffers need not be a wild, unmaintained growth). The group considered future grant money options and collaborative work with Lakes and Streams Committee to educate and encourage landowners on such buffer planning.
7. Tree Warden Legislation: Neal commented that in general he supports the proposed revised tree warden legislation (H.673). However, he is concerned that because it defines “public trees” and contains criteria for when a public hearing is required before cutting that would apply to all municipalities, it eliminates the ability of towns to determine their own criteria and he would like to see it modified to address this.
8. Other business: None.
9. Public comment: None.
10. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Date: 2/16/2020 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas  
*Approved by the Conservation Commission at the 3/10/2020 meeting*