

Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Calais Town Office
Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 7:00 pm

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

Absent: Drew Lamb

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

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Agenda revisions or additions: None.
3. Approve minutes: Larry Bush moved and Mark Brown seconded to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2019 and February 16, 2019 meetings, with edits as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Conservation Fund Balance: The current Fund balance is \$61,179.80. (\$50,000 of this Fund is pledged to the North Calais Memorial Hall project. Yesterday at Town Meeting, Mary Jacobsen thanked the Conservation Commission for their recommendation to the Selectboard for approval of funds for the Memorial Hall project.) The Chair will check with the Selectboard about the status of Trails Committee funds (a question was raised about whether the Trails Committee's funds are currently combined with Conservation Commission funds).
5. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) planning: The Chair spoke with Dan Singleton (Washington County Forester), who reads minutes to keep up with the Calais Conservation Commission's activities. They talked about how he may support the Commission's work on the inventory. The Commission worked on the following action steps for planning and preparation for the upcoming March 16 EAB Ash Tree Inventory Training Day.
 - *Identify and prioritize roads:* the group looked at paper copies of the Roads Committee's map of Calais with potential ash tree inventory routes highlighted. They reviewed the map showing the work that Joanne Garton had completed in Calais (stopping along a measured distance and indicating the level of ash tree presence). Mark Brown gave a quick tutorial on how to use Google Maps to create a sharable route on a map that indicates distance, time, and a description of the

route. The group created a series of ash tree inventory routes using Mark's method.

- *Communication with volunteers:* the group decided to prioritize gathering volunteers' email addresses going forward. Pat will post to Front Porch Forum
- *Facilitating on 3/16/19 training:* Neal and Joanne will lead, and Neal will bring time sheets (for grant documentation purposes). The group decided to make route lengths approximately 4-6 miles long (estimated to take 2-3 hours, driving; the driver's job is only driving, not counting).
- *Ash Tree Inventory App:* the group considered defining what will constitute labeling a tree as a "Priority Removal" in the app and decided to use the label when a tree fits this criteria: if it dies, will it fall on wires or on the road? It was decided not to inventory trees of less than 6 inches in diameter. The "Other fields" option is a place for a town to indicate unique data and volunteers at the inventory will be asked to make a note in this "other fields" area for a tree that is in a significant location, for example, threatening a cemetery. The group agreed that identifying a location in need of replanting will happen after the inventory is completed.
- *Other:* The Commission decided to include in the ash tree inventory routes the Town cemeteries, the Town Office, Curtis Pond swim area and the school.

The Commission agreed on the value resulting from the inventory for guiding the road crew's attention toward areas where large numbers of ash trees are located or threatening roadways/culverts. Larry Bush reported that Washington Electric Cooperative President Barry Bernstein shared that WEC will be taking responsibility for ash trees threatening power lines that are along road right of ways, but the work will be completed according to scheduled maintenance time frames.

The Commission finished up the meeting identifying final tasks: Julie and Larry will follow up with folks who signed up for the training. Posters will be in Calais stores and have spots for volunteers to sign up; Neal and Mark will gather the signups in a few days for follow up. The Chair will confirm what outstanding grant requirements may be.

6. Conservation Fund guidelines revisions: This item was tabled until a subsequent meeting.
7. Other business: None.
8. Public comment: None.

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Date: 3/6/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas

Approved by the Conservation Commission at the 5/15/2019 meeting