

**Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Calais Elementary School**  
**Wednesday, July 17, 2019, 7:00 pm**

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

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

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7 pm.
2. Agenda revisions or additions: None.
3. Approve minutes: Neal made a motion and Julie seconded to approve the minutes of the 6/20/2019 meeting. The motion passed 5-0.
4. Conservation Fund Balance: The Conservation Commission fund balance opens FY20 at \$68,545.76. This amount includes the FY20 appropriation of \$8000 and the FY19 interest which posted at the end of FY19.
5. Ash Tree Inventory Update and EAB Planning: Stephanie will connect with Joanne Garton about reporting of volunteer hours for grant purposes (Neal is compiling). Receipt of grant funds is dependent on a total of 220 in-kind volunteer work hours. So far there are 290 hours logged, with additional hours yet to be logged. The Commission discussed significant roads still in need of inventorying and divided the responsibility for completing the work over the next three weeks. Forty miles of roads have been inventoried so far (slightly over half of Calais's roads); the work takes approximately two people per mile per hour. Members agreed to report their completion of the work to Neal; he will report to Joanne and the Regional Planning Commission. CVRPC has asked for the final inventory by the end of July.

Discussion turned to next steps for utilizing the awarded grant funds; Neal will find out when the CVRPC will prepare the maps from our ash tree inventory so that public outreach efforts can be planned.

6. Conservation Fund Information: The Commission has been working on revising the Conservation Fund Guidelines. In this process, the Chair shared research she has undertaken regarding the Town's 1989 creation of the Commission and the Fund. The group reviewed copies of the warning, minutes, and statute references from that town meeting. She shared copies of the primary source documents (warning and the vote results). Conversation moved to the statute reference that defines conservation commissions creation and the powers and duties of commissions; town meeting discussion notes; potential steps forward to clarify and articulate the

relationship of the Fund to the Commission. The group discussed next Town Meeting as the appropriate time to clarify this situation.

7. Planning Commission and Water Quality Zoning Revisions: Larry, also a member of the Calais Lakes and Streams Committee, noted that the Planning Commission had several public meetings on their work revision zoning regulations. This work has been such an extended process that it has been ongoing for quite some time; Stephanie had met with their chair to review the status of revision work and offered to communicate with the Planning Commission at any time. Larry read a list of the items currently in working draft form from the Planning Commission's webpage. Larry summarized that the only reduction he identified from the perspective of maintaining conservation efforts is the shrinking of the shoreland district from 800 to 250 feet from the main shoreland (with exceptions on sides of Curtis Pond). The group discussed background: the Planning Commission had visited properties that would have this reduction from 800 feet down to 250 feet and found that there would be no effective change to the regulations they were subject to. The "overlay," which means it is a zoning district that goes over, or supersedes, the district defined by a village or other district, IF the shoreland overlay district's regulations are stricter than the village regulations. Larry commented that should the SHROD be enacted, they are significantly supportive enough that he would personally be enthusiastic to support the passage of SHROD and let go of maintaining the 800-foot shoreland protection.

The group discussed the "mitigation" approach occurring in Vermont policy that benefits the developer, and is reflected in the SHROD proposal: anyone who currently mows their lawn right up to a stream is considered "grandfathered" and may continue mowing as long as they make a vegetation effort in exchange, elsewhere. Discussion turned to the specifics and details of the regulations' extending a shoreland district over a road (rather than ending when a road interrupts the district). For example, Bliss Pond Road is 10 feet from the pond. There are another 220 feet that would otherwise be in the shoreland if not interrupted by the road. In the case of passage of the SHROD, landowners on the side of the road opposite the body of water would have their land considered in the defined 250 feet of protected space. It's not clear, however, exactly what this would mean.

The group discussed how adoption of zoning that is in alignment of state shoreland zoning regulations has the downside of being incredibly detailed and complicated. An expert's help may be necessary in order for landowners to understand and comply.

Larry updated that although Lakes and Streams has a lack of enthusiasm, it continues to proceed as a result of their desire to see the zoning regulation changes to conclusion. The Town website contains an archive of the Lakes and Streams Committee's incredibly good and useful [newsletters](#). Larry will communicate with Jan (Planning) and Noreen (Lakes and Streams) so the Conservation Commission can consider the timeline for engagement with the revisions being created by the Planning Commission.

8. Other business: Stephanie commented that growing public awareness of invasive plants' spread creates an opportunity for public education. The group discussed the possibility of a public education forum around invasive plants, perhaps drawing on state experts' resources.
9. Public comment: None.
10. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Date: 7/21/2019 Respectfully Submitted, Katie Lane-Karnas  
*Approved by the Conservation Commission at the 10/2/2019 meeting*