

Calais Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday March 22, 2022, 7pm

Via Zoom (see below)

Present at the Meeting

Attendees: Neal, Tracy, Stephanie, Larry, , Julie, Mark,

Guest: Scott Bassage, Richard Hyde, Darien McElwain

1. Agenda revisions or Edits

Minutes: Motion to approve minutes, seconded.

Minutes are approved 7:08

2. Shade Tree Plan

Neal made some changes to the shade tree plan.

-Couple of updates from last version.

-Clarifying hazard tree and what the tree warden does.

-If someone wants to cut a shade tree and doesn't know if it's hazardous, they can get tree warden or deputy tree warden to assess the tree.

The town can get tree wardens from out of town if they need to. They can pay a tree warden if needed (part of the statute). I think they are pretty minor. ??

Fix the weathers-whether

Tree has to have a risk of falling down for it to be considered a hazard tree.. It cannot be considered a hazard because of its location alone.

East Montpelier is working on their shade tree plan-anything over 4" in diameter. Neal said its basically what they have been doing. The new statute just makes it clear.

-Any reason we should change from 6"-4" diameter trees? Neal said 6" is what is used in the Calais Road Standards and it's reasonable.

-Next step for us is to take the plan to the Selectboard for them to hold a public hearing.

-Larry moves to approve the plan as drafted by Neal.

-Julie Seconded

-approved

-Send draft to Selectboard Chair. This is what ConCom recommends and it needs a public hearing with the selectboard.

-Sharon is now the chair of the selectboard.

Norway Maples at Maple Corner?

-Are they covered under this plan? Can people cut down those Norway Maples that are invading the woods?

-25' from centerline is the Town ROW. There just needs to be a conversation with the Town Tree Warden.

-The shade tree plan will get incorporated into an ordinance some time in the future.

3. Development Review Board (DRB) and roll of ConCom

DRB is the regulatory body in Town to review subdivisions and other development

-They wanted to understand forest blocks and connecting habitats further

-The DRB's role is to advise the DRB on natural resource issues.

-John McCullough sent the Connor preliminary application to the DRB members

-It would be helpful for the Commission members to review the application and see if they have any comments or questions. Stephanie will forward the application to everyone along with a copy of the letter that the DRB sent to Connor identifying the additional information needed for the preliminary hearing.

-Should the commission weigh in again? Attend the preliminary hearing and ask questions or provide comments?

-Site visit. May be worth the ConCom going and going with the DRB. Larry will contact Anne Winchester (DRB chair).

-Letter that the DRB wrote to the applicants

-Eric Sorenson explained to the DRB about the state conservation design. The point of act 171 is the state is trying to encourage towns to protect interior forest blocks and connecting habitat. If there was going to be any legal ability for the town to protect these it would need to be put into an ordinance.

-Can we ask them to consider putting the land in to conservation as part of their design. Under section 3.12 of the Calais zoning there may be the ability to protect these resources. . Configured to prevent significant impacts to natural features. Does not specific what undo adverse impact is.???

4.) Bliss Pond Forest

- Last meeting with discussed potentially splitting the forest to both a working forest and a preserved section
- Continuing effort
- Hope that in late April they can walk the forest
- Right of way gained for access in 1997.
- There may be some property boundary discrepancies.
- Boundary needs to be reviewed.

5.) Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. section 313(2), Stephanie moved to go into executive session to discuss a real estate matter. Julie seconded it and the Commission voted in favor unanimously.

6.) Go out of executive session- 8:07

7.) Water Ordinance

- *Did we ever do anything regarding a ground water ordinance?
- Stephanie to do a quick review of the town plan and zoning regs. Larry will look into it further.

8.) Knotweed prevention

The town of Warren says it is having some success with eradicating knotweed

- Looking for a volunteer to contact Warren ConCom to see what they are doing? Tracy and Julie to take some time over the next month or so to contact the Warren ConCom (and potentially other towns) and find out what they have done that has been successful.

Next meeting May 18th

Meeting ended 8:33