

Calais Conservation Commission Minutes

7/5/2023 - Calais Town Hall & online

Approved 8/2/2023

Present: Larry Bush, Paul Olander, Stephanie Kaplan, Mark Brown
via Zoom: none

Guests: Scott Bassage(recorder), Noreen Bryan, Anne Toolan, Walter Amses, Paul Gomez

Proceedings:

- *Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm.*

- Additions to agenda:
 - Electro shock in our ponds
 - Stephanie will look in it.
 - Emerald Ash Borer officially infesting Calais
 - Larry will include Neal and will post a notice about EAB to the public with links to Forests and Parks website.

- The minutes of June 7, 2023 were approved

- There was no public comment

- Non-native invasive species
 - Paul agreed to join the team of Mark, Noreen and Neal
 - The group asked Noreen to organize a town wide survey and mapping for phragmites.
 - Noreen will continue researching how to control different sized patches of phragmites.
 - Larry will contact Judy Robert and Ruth Coppersmith for permission to begin control of phragmites on their property. Larry will also ask for their help with control efforts.
 - Anne Toolan will ask the road crew to identify patches of phragmites.

 - See the extract below from Noreen's email of 7/6 "Next Steps for Phragmites

- *Introduction of, and talk with, prospective new commission member:*
 - Walter Ames said he may be interested in joining the Conservation Commission. He will attend more meetings before making up his mind.

- *Introductory discussion about Community Land Trusts.*
 - Larry reminded the group about the biodiversity goal in Act 59.
 - Paul Olander presented information about Community Land Trusts and how land trusts can play a part in achieving the Vermont Climate Action Plan goal to permanently conserve 30% of all land in Vermont by 2030. See working draft in attached .pdf file "LTandCLT-PaulOlander"
 - Paul noted that there are many properties in Calais enrolled in the Current Use Program, but that very few of those properties are permanently conserved, and few are over 200 acres.
 - A Community Land Trust is usually concerned with affordable housing and secondarily with Land preservation. The CLT owns the land but residents own the homes upon that

land. In this way the cost of home ownership is just the home. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has a number of good policy papers on responsible affordable housing.

- A land trust (e.g. Vermont Land Trust, Northern Rivers Land Trust) is concerned primarily with permanent protection of the working landscape and sensitive natural areas.
 - The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of land trusts and conservation.
 - The group discussed other lands trusts and ways for Calais to preserve properties under the VLT minimum of 200 Acres.
- *Possible concert venue on Woodbury Mountain Road*
 - Larry introduced the discussion of the “Secret Garden” concert on Woodbury Mountain Road.
 - The ten acre parcel is in the resource recreation district and is a critical interior forest block.
 - Larry is concerned that the planned activity is not consistent with the intention of Calais’ Resource Recreation Zoning district.
 - Neighboring landowners are concerned about the potential for a huge crowd, noise, drugs, traffic and other issues.
 - The Zoning Administrator told one neighboring landowner that Carlo Rovetto does not need a zoning permit.
 - Carlo Rovetto has been told that he needs an Act 250 permit before he can hold the concert.
 - Discussion followed. No action was taken.

Action Items:

- Stephanie:
 - Look into use of electric shock in Calais’ waters
- Larry:
 - Work with Neal and post a notice about EAB
 - Contact Judy Robert and Ruth Copersmith about phragmites.
 - Help Walt Amses decide whether to join the Conservation Commission.
- Paul:
 - Join the team of Tracy, Noreen, Neal to work on invasives.
- Anne Toolan:
 - Ask the road crew to identify patches of phragmites.
- Noreen:
 - Continue to organize invasives control.
- Scott
 - Distribute draft minutes in a timely fashion.

From Noreen’s email of 7/6/23:

Per our discussion last evening, we are planning to move out quickly before the next CCC meeting to control the spread of phragmites. To be sure that we are all on the same sheet of music, here is the set of actions that I understood from our conversation. Please let me know if revisions are needed.

The goal of cutting phragmites is to prevent spread by seeds and retard/prevent expansion of rhizomes that would increase the area covered by phragmites.

Actions/Tasks	Who	Completion Date
Conduct drive-by survey to determine locations of phragmites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Assign survey areas per committee member • <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute Calais map to each committee member • <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct survey for each area • <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Consolidate individual survey findings into one map 	Noreen Noreen All Noreen	7 July 7 July 14 July 17 July
Decide which patches of phragmites will be targeted for cutting in 2023	All via Zoom or email	Week of 17 July
Research protocol for cutting phragmites to assure most effective methods and minimize risk of spreading phragmites including timing, cutting methods, removal (or not) of cut material.	Noreen	21 July
Contact property owners and determine who will do the cutting (e.g. property owner or group of volunteers or ?)	TBD	Week of July 24th
Cut phragmites – beginning 1 st week of August	TBD	?