

Calais Conservation Commission Minutes

5/18/2023 - Calais town hall & online

Present: Larry Bush, Mark Brown, Julie Hand, Stephanie Kaplan, Neal Maker, Tracy Sudhalter

Guests: Scott Bassage(recorder), Reed Cherington, Charlotte Hanna, Denise Wheeler(via Zoom)

Proceedings:

←Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm.

←Additions:

o None.

←Letter to Selectboard about the proposal to discontinue TH 7:

- o The Conservation Commission reviewed a draft letter to the selectboard. Commission members suggested changes to emphasize the statutory role of a Vermont Conservation Commission and the applicable standards. The changes were separately recorded by Neal.
- o Stephanie pointed out that the land owners have to prove that the discontinuance is in the public interest rather than in their interest.
- o Larry Bush moved to approve the letter, Julie Hand seconded. The commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

←Shade Tree Preservation Plan:

- o The Selectboard held a public hearing on May 9th to discuss the proposed Shade Tree Preservation Plan. Based on comments from the SB and the public, Neal made changes to the document. Members of the Conservation Commission reviewed the edits addressing those comments and suggested a few revisions.
- o Larry Bush moved to approve the Shade Tree Preservation Plan, Mark Brown seconded. The commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion.
- o Neal received a document from a Town resident about Title 24, Chapter 117, § 4413 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated (V.S.A). The document provides that a municipal bylaw cannot regulate accepted silvicultural practices and forestry operations. After discussing the possible meaning of that in this context, it was decided that Neal will contact Elise Schadler for clarification about whether the statute has any impact on our Shade Tree Preservation Plan.

←Ornamental trees: Jeremy has said that he is all in favor of planing crab apples at the Town Office. Neal has left a message for Nicko about buying and planting, but has not heard back yet.

←Larry and Neal continue to work on the Bliss pond town forest questions.

← Larry has asked a list of Conservation Commissions about curb cuts. He has heard from just one town. Stephanie is looking into whether a town can add criteria to their curb cut ordinance to the criteria listed in the state statute. She will be talking with the town attorney about this.

←The meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

←The next meeting will be announced at some time in the future.

Action Items:

←Neal:

←Contact Elise Schadler at the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

←Contact Nicko to schedule tree planting & consultation.

← Stephanie:

← Talk to town attorney about curb cut ordinances.