

**Calais Conservation Commission Minutes**  
**5/03/2023 - Calais town office & online**  
**Approved 6/7/2023**

**Present:** Larry Bush, Mark Brown, Julie Hand, Neal Maker (recorder), Tracy Sudhalter

**Absent:** Stephanie Kaplan

**Guests:** Jeffery Allen, Scott Bassage, Noreen Bryan, John José

**Proceedings:**

- *Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.*
- *March 16, 2023 minutes were approved with minor edit*
- *Elections:*
  - Larry was nominated for Chair of the Commission and unanimously elected.
  - Neal was nominated for Vice Chair and unanimously elected.
- *Planning Commission public hearing:*

Larry attended the May 2 hearing and submitted the Commission's statement on the proposed changes to shoreland zoning. Stephanie also submitted her own statement. PC chair Jan Ohlsson addressed many of the Commission's points during the hearing. Next, the PC will send the proposed zoning changes to the Selectboard, who may make changes and/or schedule their own public hearing.
- *Non-native invasive plants:*

Neal and Noreen have been working on identifying invasive plants growing in Calais and prioritizing which species should be targeted for treatment. They brought a list of species and observations as a starting place. Noreen has identified phragmites as a candidate for treatment, because it is particularly damaging to wetland ecosystems and is still only present in relatively isolated pockets, so controlling it is a possibility. John and Jeffery shared their concern about yellow flag iris, which is spreading quickly in Adamant and threatens the wetlands around Sodom Pond. They are still unsure how to best treat the species, but are experimenting and consulting with others who have experience with it. Neal reported that there are a number of species that still appear to have very small populations in Central VT, but which are very aggressive in the southern US. They could be important ones to address before they spread and become too costly to control.

Over the next month, Neal and Noreen will identify a few specific treatment projects that can be tackled this year, with the help of Tracy and Mark who will do a windshield survey of town to start mapping invasive populations. Commission members may organize an invasive identification workshop among themselves ahead of the mapping. John will keep Larry apprised of new information about yellow-flag. Mark will also start talking to students and teachers at U-32 about involving kids.

The Commission will begin planning a volunteer effort at the June meeting to tackle the projects. Mark suggested an 'Invasives Day', kind of like Green-Up Day, and others stressed the importance of good organization to make sure that volunteers stay safe and use effective removal techniques. Noreen also suggested a separate outreach program to educate landowners about invasives; particularly the species that are widespread and difficult for the Commission to take on.

- Appeal for new members:
  - The Selectboard is trying to fill as many vacant positions across town government as possible, and Larry drafted an appeal for new Conservation Commission members to help. Julie edited it and provided comments. Further editing was done at the meeting, and Mark will work with Larry to reformat the document and send it to the Selectboard.
- *Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.*
- *The next meeting is scheduled for June 7 at 7:00 pm, at the town office and on Zoom.*

**Action Items:**

- Larry:
  - Get town website updated with information about new Commission officers
  - Work with Mark to finalize appeal for new members, and send to Selectboard
- Mark:
  - Work with Larry to finalize appeal for new members
  - Windshield survey of invasive plants
  - Explore student involvement in invasive control
- Neal:
  - Send blank town map to Tracy and Mark for invasive survey
  - Work with Noreen, Tracy and Mark on planning invasive control projects
- Tracy:
  - Windshield survey of invasive plants