

**MINUTES**  
**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**  
**CALAIS TOWN HALL**  
**TOWN OF CALAIS, VERMONT**  
**MARCH 17, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anne Winchester (Chair), Ryan Edwards (Vice Chair), Stephanie Kaplan, Dot Helling (Clerk), Scott Bassage (Alternate).

OTHERS PRESENT: John McCullough (Zoning Administrator), Eric Sorenson, Larry Bush, Jordan Keyes, Matthew Lutz.

ABSENT BOARD MEMBERS: Ashley Moore, Megan Sullivan, Denise Wheeler (alternate).

The meeting was called to order by Chair Anne Winchester at 7:05pm. Anne stated that the purpose of this meeting was to receive information from Eric Sorenson a 25 year ecologist for the State of Vermont with expertise in conservation design and natural communities. Eric laid out four general areas for discussion: (1) utilizing the Vermont Conservation Design to conserve biodiversity; (2) utilizing the Biofinder website as a tool; (3) understanding the natural resource elements of the town plan like forest blocks and land connectivity; and (4) things to consider as we evaluate projects before the DRB for conformance with the natural resources section of the town plan.

Eric began by describing the Vermont Fish and Wildlife “Vermont Conservation Design” as a document which lays out a vision to sustain the state’s ecologically functional landscape based on our best science. He then described Biofinder Vermont which can be found on the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources website or at [www:Biofinder.Vermont.gov](http://www:Biofinder.Vermont.gov). This tool allows the user to zoom in and identify features at landscape and natural community scales in order to conserve biological diversity and protect the landscape and species in the face of shifts due to climate and landscape changes. Calais has many physical landscape diversity blocks that can be identified using Biofinder. The Calais Town Plan was revised in 2021 to take into account factors to help in avoiding, for example, permanent interior forest fragmentation resulting from development, and to optimize the value of old forest and support new forest. See the maps on the Town of Calais website listed at the end of the Town Plan index.

Eric talked about the importance of house siting to maintain connectivity, and presented examples. Group discussion was held regarding connectivity, core forest blocks and the question of when encroachment on the edges becomes too much.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy (Dot) Helling, DRB Clerk