

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes 24 March 2015

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7:00 p.m., were commission members Steve Willbanks (Chair), Tii McLane, Jared Jenisch, Kate Root, Mike Hebb, J.T. Horn, Chuck Sherman and Amy Metz. Town Residents: Patrick Mullins.

Meeting Minutes:

1. Approved 24 February 2015 Minutes

2. Maple Hill Culvert:

- a. Culvert replacement anticipated this Summer 2015. Replacing existing culvert with a larger bottomless arch culvert.
- b. We have received about 135K in grant funding. Ron Rhodes has been pivotal in securing all funds.
- c. Pre-Bid Site Visit held on Monday March 23 at 2pm. The following questions were addressed:

1. What is the plan with the overhead wires?

A: The Town is contacting Green Mountain Power to address the overhead electric wire that is over the culvert. The wire is shown on the plans. Please submit your bid as if the wire has been addressed.

2. What is the pile diameter at the butt considering they may need to be trimmed?

A: The piles may be trimmed once driven to an acceptable level.

3. What is the soil bearing capacity under the culvert?

A: A full geotechnical assessment was not performed for this project. The estimated capacity at the bottom of the piles is 10,000 pounds per square inch or larger. The capacity in the soft material under the structure is not known.

4. What is the estimated construction time period?

A: Construction is anticipated to take place for two to four weeks. Road closure is expected as other local roads can be used to access both sides of the culvert.

ii. Bid proposals are due COB Friday March 27

iii. ACTION: Amy will ask Ron for a list of the awarded grant funds

3. Town Trails/Pruning Clinic:
 - a. June 6 - National Trails Day Hike – Annual end to end hike of the Strafford Trails.
 - b. Mike will take care of trees that have blown down across the trail
 - c. Pruning Workshop - April 4 from 1- 4pm at the Justin Morrill Education Building. Workshop is full so Mike is going to have a second workshop on April 11.
 - d. Orchid Tour will take place mid-late June.
4. SCC Calendar/Events for 2015
 - a. Podunk Wildlife Management Area Field Visits
 - i. May visit with John Buck (ANR Wildlife Biologist) to see the logging project.
 - ii. Podunk Pond Visit – Area maintained by the state (John Buck is Wildlife Biologist). The pond is man-made but has become a town asset. Unfortunately the dam is failing at the pond and the state is inclined to let this happen because the cost to maintain the pond would be an expensive project. The Commission feels that the town may want to advocate maintenance of the pond.
 - b. Invasive Workshops – Brought awareness. Would like to continue these sessions in 2015.
5. Invasive Removal – Taylor Valley Road
 - a. Glossy Buckthorn found on Taylor Valley in a 25ac corridor.
 - b. Proposing a project to take place in late summer or early fall.
 - c. Tii contacted Redstart Consulting to get a project estimate. There are two ways to treat: 1.) Cutting stumps, or 2.) Foliar Spray (you need a licensed applicator for this method).
 - d. Estimate from Redstart for 25 acres:
 - i. Cut Stumps is \$300 to \$400 per acre. 10K for 25ac.
 - ii. Spray Treatment \$150 to \$200 per ac.
 - e. We could have Redstart do the chainsaw work and have volunteers take care of the whips.
 - f. ACTION - J.T. will see what grant proposals may be available to help with funding
 - g. ACTION - J.T. will draft a letter to the landowners to get their permission.
 - h. Once landowners approve the project, we will need to get Town approval, especially if we recommend some method other than cutting.
6. Wetlands Inventory
 - a. ACTION - Refresher training for identification and categorization. Tii, Mike, and Jared will lead the training.
 - b. We would like to get an idea of scope for the Wetlands project
7. SCC Board Vacancy
 - a. Two vacancies:
 - i. Kate Root appointed to two year term
 - ii. Chuck Sherman – Motion passed to appoint Chuck to the one-year term position.
8. ad hoc Hazard Mitigation Committee

- a. The intention of this committee is to identify structures that could be lost to a flood. Within Hazard Mitigation Zones. This may help with necessary FEMA funding.
 - b. The Committee is asking for a representative from the SCC. Chuck is volunteering to be this point person.
 - c. ACTION – Amy will provide Chuck with a copy of the River Corridor Management Plan that was completed by Bear Creek Environmental.
9. Draft SCC Bylaws:
- a. J.T proposed to add the following new function to the Principal Functions (page 3).
 - i. 8) to assist landowners with management actions that protect, enhance, restore, or conserve the natural cultural, recreational or scenic resources of the municipality. Assistance may be in the form of providing grants, technical assistance, contracted services, materials and equipment, volunteer services or other forms of support. Any management actions should only be conducted by the commission with the consent of the landowner. Any landowner assistance should be provided only if it is deemed in the public interest and not solely a benefit to the landowner.
 - b. ACTION - Steve to look at the statutes and approve J.T.'s addition.
10. New Business
- a. UVLT acquired about 200ac. on Ely Mountain. Rick Biddle and Mike Hebb are recording wildlife tracks for UVLT. The intends to protect and stay away from these sensitive areas as they create trails and other recreational areas for the property.
11. Old Business
- a. J.T. attended the Upper Valley Land Trust Conservation Commissions Meeting Thursday February 26. Overall the message was to ask Conservation Commissions to think regionally and beyond their boundaries.0

Next meeting: April 28, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Metz, Recording Secretary