

ESSEX CONSERVATION & TRAILS COMMITTEE (CTC)

This meeting was remote only

Minutes Tuesday, 4/12/2022

Members Attending: Alan Botula Chair, Mike Spaeder Vice Chair, Lauren Gaffney Cohen (at 8:00), Shannon Jackson, Betsy Dunn Clerk, Rusty Brink, Erin DeVries, Ken Signorello, Steve Dowd

Staff present: Darren Schibler, Town Planner

Staff absent: Chuck Vile, Tree Warden

Members of the public attending: Ethan Tapper, Patrick Kitchen, Sarah Salatino, Marijus Brazickes, Cheryl Van Epps, David Rous

Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm by Alan Botula

Agenda Item 1. Agenda

Motion to amend the agenda by Betsy Dunn to include the STEM Academy's project to plant 100 Dogwood trees at Indian Brook Reservoir. Ken seconded it and the Vote was 8/0

Agenda Item 2. Public to be heard

There were no comments by the public

Agenda Item 3. Minutes

Ken made a motion to amend the minutes to read: The vote to Launch the date for the Adopt-a-Tree program will occur tonight (4/12/2022). Erin seconded the motion and the vote was 8/0

Agenda Item 4. Spring Clean Up

This project is being led by Shannon, Steve and Erin. They have three issues:

1. They would like to ensure that all members of our committee will be present for the clean-up at Indian Brook on the 21st of May arriving at 12:30
2. They want to have a Pre-Event to locate all the Buckthorn and Honeysuckle that requires removal. Ethan Tanner indicated he would walk the Park with us and identify the plants and we would tag them for their removal.
3. They asked if we have access to a gator to assist with the removal of the debris. Ethan indicated that it is not necessary to remove them as there is no danger of propagation at this time in their life cycle. This makes things a little easier. Shannon and Betsy will coordinate with Ethan to choose a date, and will let the team know the details.

Mike posed a question regarding the use of pesticides on public lands. Does this require some sort of certification? Ethan Tapper said yes it does. There needs to be a person certified as a pesticide applicator. He also indicated that this designation could be obtained online. He gave us a contact at the Agency of Agriculture how could help us out.

Mathew.wood@vermont.gov.

Ethan also said we could use the 4 oz bottles of Bingo Dauber to use instead of the Buckthorn Blaster. Best place to buy the glyphosate with 40% concentration is Tractor supply.

Darren has posters ready to be placed around town for the Clean Up. Publicity should be on Facebook, Front Porch Forum, (Darren will post there so all the neighborhoods will be reached), Essex Reporter and the Essex Retorter.

Agenda Item 5. Adopt-A-Tree, and Arbor Day

Alan is the lead on this project. Betsy provided a picture of the rocks we will use for the families who are in the program. This completes the needed components, and the project is ready to go live. Steve will work on the signage for trees that are adopted by businesses or groups such as the boy scouts. Ken moved to adopt the Launch date of May 17th. Betsy seconded it and the vote was 8/0.

Darren indicated that there are several families that have already indicated they would like to be in the program. We have 7 trees that are already newly planted. The Essex Free Library will host a painting event and Ken will take pictures of the event.

Alan was glad to report that we did receive the Greening School grant. Congratulations to him for his hard work on this. We will receive a Crabapple tree from Horsford Nursery and Heritage Tree Co. will do the planting. We just must get the tree to Founders school. This still must be worked out. Sarah Jablonski, Principal at Founders has students who are working on this as well. The planting will be on Arbor Day May 17th. Once again Ken will be taking pictures of the event.

Agenda Item 6. Pollinators.

Betsy is lead on this project. Betsy and Sarah Salatino from Full Circle gardens looked over the sites that Darren indicated could be used for the project, and are Town owned. The Unsworth property has no sight lines from the road and seemed a poor choice. The area in Mathieu Forest along the Alder Brook also was deemed not feasible. The fields across from Saxon Hill Rd was also not a great site. This was also how Erin felt after seeing the sites. We all agreed that the path from Essex Way toward Countryside was the best choice. We have to get final approval from Ally Vile of Parks and Recreation for the project. Betsy will also check in with Public Works. Patrick Kitchen from Bee the Change indicated that if we get approval they could start as soon as May. Kem made a motion to approve Bee the Change to plant a pollinator garden along the path from Essex Way to Countryside and to start as soon as May, as long as we have received approval from Ally Vile. We will be taking pictures of the ground-breaking and at intervals in the process. Sarah Salatino indicated that she would also be donating plants to the gardens.

Agenda Item 7. Spongy Moth Outreach

Ken is lead on this project. Ken has met with 8 HOAs (Homeowners Associations). They are being very receptive to his outreach. There are some very bad areas with and the moth's eggs.

The HOAs visited were: Pinewood neighborhood, Royal Park Condominium, and Oak Park (have the worst infestations), Fort Ethan Allen, the Commons at Essex Way, Mansfield Townhomes, Village at Old Stage and 104 South St.

Mike wondered if the wet spring has helped at all. In theory it should. That's a wait and see.

Ken has developed a fact sheet regarding the Spongy Moth. Its two pages with the life cycle a method of treatment. Prior to giving this out, Darren has sent it to the Vermont Forest Health Laboratory for approval. It's now in their hands and once approved it will be a handout for homeowners. Ken would like to have invasive(s) on our web site.

Betsy made a motion to accept Ken's fact sheet, pending approval by the Forest Health Laboratory, and place the Town's and the CTC's logo on it. The motion was seconded by Shannon. The vote was 8/0

Agenda Item 8. Dogs in the Parks

Betsy is lead on this. She developed an informational sheet to be handed out to dog owners, when the register their pet, and when the receive an Indian Brook pass that allows for a dog. The greeter for entry to the park can also hand out the sheet. Discussion about making a cartoon that is humorous ensued. Ken indicated that a professional cartoon would cost in the neighborhood of \$120. We asked if we could ask Parks and Recreation for the money.

It was agreed that the informational sheet must be condensed, too long no one will read it. Betsy and Shannon will work on that, and Alan, Steve and Betsy will work on the cartoon.

Agenda Item 9. Planning Commission Collaboration

Mike and Alan are lead on this. The Planning Commission is asking if the CTC would have a representative from the CTC collaborate on upcoming projects and zoning updates. Betsy suggested that the CTC send a representative to all Planning Commission meetings to also allow for more collaboration on development applications, though Darren will also bring relevant projects to the CTC's attention.

Darren then presented an application by Autumn Harp for a roughly 100,000-square foot warehouse building at 35 Thompson Drive. The applicant is asking for a waiver for the 50' buffer. They indicate that the fire department doesn't like all the trees in the way for their access. Autumn Harp wants to put in shrubs instead. The Town and Fellowship of the Wheel have a trail that will be affected by this development. We need an easement to allow for the trail. This Thursday is the public hearing for this application. Betsy made a motion that the CTC support the buffer waiver provided that public trail access be retained. Shannon seconded it. Discussion about our friendly amendment ensued and we suggested that Alan as Chair present this at Thursday's meeting. Vote was 8/0.

We did a little clean up on an item left from the last meeting: the Stem Academy's project of planting 100 Dogwood trees along Indian Brook at Essex High School. This will take place on May 23rd and starting at 11:00 until 2:30, please bring shovels and hammers. They are asking for us to do some publicity for them as well. Darren will put the event on Front Porch Forum, and we will put in Facebook and other social media sites. Contact the Reporter and the Retorter as well. The contact person for this is Lee Ann Smith at the Academy.

Darren reminded us about the regional Active Transportation Plan for new routes (for trails, paths, bike lanes, etc.), including info on the map to add existing and suggest needed improvements. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

And please read the reading file.

Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Shannon. The vote was 8/0 at 8:48pm.

Minutes approved May 10, 2022.