

ESSEX CONSERVATION & TRAILS COMMITTEE (CTC)

This meeting was remote and in Person at 81 Main St.

Draft minutes of Tuesday, 5/10/2022

Members Attending: Alan Botula Chair, Mike Spaeder Vice Chair, Lauren Gaffney Cohen, Erin DeVries, Ken Signorello (clerk for the meeting), Steve Dowd
Staff present: Darren Schibler, Town Planner, Chuck Vile, Tree Warden
Members of the public attending: None

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

Agenda Item 1. Agenda

No changes made.

Agenda Item 2. Public to be heard

There were no comments by the public

Agenda Item 3. Business Items

a. Spring Clean Up Preparation

Steve Down discussed Boy Scouts attending Pre Cleanup Meeting on 5/19 and followup later in the year. He reviewed publicity efforts.
Alan Botula discussed organizing team leaders, consensus was to wait till the event.
Meeting with Ethan Tapper confirmed on 5/19 for 10:15
Erin DeVries contacted Aly Vile about logistics
There was discussion on handling pulled and cut buckthorn. If roots are attached they should be removed.
There was concern about acquiring buckthorn blaster with hope that Ethan Tapper will bring sufficient.

b. Arbor Day Preparation

Alan reviewed the event:
Ceremony will be on 5/17 9:30
Program details still to be worked out
Location will be at Founders Memorial School
Alan Botula made a motion, seconded by Lauren Cohen, to approve the Arbor Day Press Release with the corrected details of the time of the event and the anticipated class to be supplied before the release goes out, and if unable to determine the class it should go out with just the time correction. The motion passed 6-0.
Darren will send it out no later than Friday

c. Pollinator Planting Update

Darren explained that the plan so far is to plant along the bike path in Countryside and Essex Way. Other suggested areas are along the parade ground track at Fort Ethan Allen

d. Dogs at Town Parks

Members made a number of suggestions about how to communicate with park users about dog leash regulation:.

Lauren: QR Code, not paper

Alan: More signage

Darren: via Ally Police department can do some outreach

Lauren: mentioned Horse manure, and the idea of limited time periods when there would be no dogs at a park.

Darren via Ally introduce a dog Voice and Site training program

Steve: This is a Parks and Recreation issue - we should confirm the suggestions made by Ally.

Lauren offered to reach out to trainers

e. Proposed CTC Charter Changes.

Darren presented a proposed revised Conservation and Trails Committee Charter.

Steve commented that the committee itself has no input on appointments.

Lauren suggested the committee should be able to have input on selections.

Erin proposed changing language to add socioeconomic backgrounds.

Ken Signorello made a motion, seconded by Erin DeVries, to accept the charter and forward to the Selectboard for approval.

Ken Signorello made a motion, seconded by Steve Dowd, to amend the trail section to read: "To maintain and to support the development and maintenance of multi-use trails, sidewalks and a greenway system..."

Amendment passed 6-0

Ken Signorello made a motion, seconded by Lauren Cohen, to amend the end of the third paragraph under "Powers" to read: "...as well as residents of various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic areas of the Town, including landowners and non-landowners." Amendment Passed 6-0

Original amended motion passed 6-0

Lauren Cohen left the meeting at 8:00pm.

f. Town Planning Update

Alan reviewed Planning Commission Work Groups being formed. The CTC agreed to assign members to work groups as follows:

- Saxon Hill Master Plan: Betsy, Alan, Erin
- 2024 Town Plan update: Alan, Ken, Erin

- Zoning Permitted and Conditional Uses: Ken

Alan indicated the next planning commission meeting would include an invitation to workgroup members.

Darren displayed the planning commission topic areas highlighted their priorities,

Ken also requested that the Planning Commission's work plan include initiatives to support working lands (agriculture and forestry) and associated industries. Darren supported this idea and suggested that it could be included in the 2024 Town Plan update, or as a separate working group that also addressed forest integrity and wildlife habitat under Act 171.

Steve suggested that members visit the Saxon Hill industrial area and note the buildings that are there.

Darren suggested adding a working lands and agricultural land work group.

Darren said a Saxon Hill land owner has proposed looking at reorganizing industrial development in Saxon Hill including adding more land into recreational use and that the Committee should have input on this. One specific proposal is to change the industrial uses allowed.

Darren displayed a map of Saxon Hill ownership.

Alan asked how the Committee can participate in these use considerations. He suggested adding an item to the Committee work plan and form an associated subcommittee to include Ken, Alan.

Erin expressed interest in being included in the workgroup including Saxon Hill Master plan and the 2024 Town particularly as it relates to water quality.

g. Work plan review

Alan reviewed the CTC's work plan, and revisions were made to reflect collaboration with the Planning Commission and CTC members assigned to tasks.

Ken reported that he had not made any progress on trail mapping, but suggested that until he does, the Town could provide links to AllTrails on its website with a disclaimer that they are not official Essex trails. Darren would check if that's OK with Ally and help coordinate the website updates.

Steve raised concerns about how many clicks are required. Ken offered to work with Steve to produce such a linked list.

Erin also reported that she had not made progress on water quality initiatives, but she, Darren, and Chuck agreed to meet (possibly also with Rusty if the Conservation

Reserve Fund could be involved) and review potential projects before the next CTC meeting. Ken brought up the blue green algae issue at Indian Brook.

Agenda Item 4. Consent Items

Ken Signorello made a motion, seconded by Erin De Vries, to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2022 meeting. The motion passed 5-0.

Reading File: There was brief discussion of the Planning Commission's work on updates to the Town Center zoning regulations, as well as upcoming events from the Essex Community Historical Society.

Mike Spaeder made a motion, seconded by Steve Dowd, to adjourn the meeting. The vote passed 5-0 at 8:25pm.

Minutes submitted by Besty Dunn, Clerk.

Minutes approved June 14, 2022.