

CONSERVATION & TRAILS COMMITTEE (CTC)
Essex Town Offices, 81 Main St., Essex Junction, Vermont 05452

Draft minutes Tuesday 8/9/2022

Members Attending: Alan Botula, Chair; Mike Spaeder, Vice Chair; Betsy Dunn, Clerk; Rusty Brink; Lauren Gaffney Cohen; Erin De Vries; Shannon Jackson; Ken Signorello;

Members Absent: Steve Dowd

Staff Present: Darren Schibler, Town Planner

Members of the public: Jean McBride, The Essex Reporter; Sally Fleury

Meeting called to order at 6:33 PM by Alan

AGENDA ITEM 1: Election of Officers

Schibler administered nominations and elections for Chair.

Spaeder made a motion, seconded by Cohen, to elect Alan Botula as Chair. The motion passed 7-0.

Botula assumed the role of Chair and administered nominations and elections for other officers.

Botula made a motion, seconded by Cohen, to elect Mike Spaeder as Vice Chair. The motion passed 7-0.

De Vries arrived at 6:35pm.

Signorello made a motion, seconded by Jackson, to elect Dunn as Vice Chair. The motion passed 8-0.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Agenda Additions and Changes

No changes to the agenda were proposed. **De Vries made a motion, seconded by Spaeder, to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed 8-0.**

AGENDA ITEM 3: Public to Be Heard

Fleury requested permission to relocate a Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (VAST) trail on her property to a nearby Town-owned property along Towers Road. Schibler asked Fleury to contact him after the meeting to review the proposal, which could be brought before the CTC.

Fleury also requested information on whether the Resource Preservation District – Industrial zone includes any provisions regulating noise, and what does “conservation” mean in this context. Schibler recommended that Fleury follow the Planning Commission’s discussions of this topic.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Short Items

A. Minutes

Brink made a motion, seconded by De Vries, to approve the minutes of July 12, 2022. The motion passed 8-0.

B. Street Tree Management in 2023

The CTC discussed the memo and proposed change to the Tree Care Policy.

Brink left the meeting at approximately

Botula made a motion, seconded by Spaeder, to insert the following language into Section(V)(a)(i) of the Essex Tree Care Policy: “At the discretion of the Tree Warden, trees planted as replacements for existing shade trees may be as small as 5-gallon container size if the tree is registered in the Tree Adoption Program.” The motion passed 7-0.

C. Invasives at Indian Brook Park and Fall Clean-Up Day Preparation

Schibler and Jackson provided updates on this topic and the CTC discussed plans for the event.

Jackson left at approximately 8:06pm.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Business Items

A. Spongy Moth Monitoring Plan

After the Committee discussed Signorello’s proposal, Dunn made a motion, seconded by Signorello, to approve the Spongy Moth Monitoring Plan. The motion failed 3-3.

B. Trail Mapping Project

Schibler briefly noted that the CTC members should begin inventorying trails using the forms provided, and staff will update the maps as information is submitted.

Given the late hour, Botula suggested postponing the work plan discussion to the next meeting, to which there was general agreement.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Development Review

A. Pinewood Section I.

Schibler provided an overview of the project, which has been revised from prior submittals over the past year. The CTC was still deeply concerned with the lack of clustering and associated impacts to forest and habitat blocks, as well as the

proposal to impact steep slopes, which could lead to erosion issues that would create a financial burden for the Town and homeowners due to required repairs.

Signorello made a motion, seconded by Spaeder, to authorize the Chair to submit and present a letter to the Planning Commission on behalf of the CTC, and that prior to this, the CTC shall be sent a copy of the letter for review, and a special meeting be called if significant changes are required. The motion passed 6-0.

B. 60 Colonel Page Road

Schibler described the proposal, which was pitched as a low-density subdivision that would provide additional space for “homesteading” families. The CTC expressed skepticism that such a proposal would function as envisioned in the long term, and recommended that the homes be further clustered to provide shared open space for a more functional shared farming operation.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Reading File

No committee member comments were made during this section.

Dunn made a motion, seconded by Signorello, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 6-0 at 9:15pm.

Draft minutes submitted by Darren Schibler, Town Planner