

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

Minutes of Wednesday, October 20, 2021

In attendance: Alan Botula, Chair; Betsy Dunn (Clerk); Lauren Gaffney Cohen; Shannon Jackson; Casey Clark

Town Staff present: Darren Schibler, Town Planner; Chuck Vile, Town Forester

Energy Committee Members present: Will Dodge, Chair; Dorothy Bergendahl; Michael Fink; Phil March; Natalee Braun; David Skopin; Irene Wrenner

Others: Ken Signorello, Jeb Spaulding, Sharon Zukowski

Botula called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

AGENDA ITEM #1: Welcome to New Members

Members of both the Conservation & Trails Committee and the Essex Energy Committee introduced themselves.

AGENDA ITEM #2: Public Comments

There were no public comments.

AGENDA ITEM #3: Agenda Changes and Approval

Botula made a motion, seconded by Dunn, to move Agenda Item 6 before Agenda Item 5. The motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #4: Election of Clerk

Schibler explained the duties of the Clerk. Botula called for volunteers, and Dunn offered to serve as Clerk. Botula made a motion, seconded by Jackson, to elect Betsy Dunn as the Clerk of the Conservation & Trails Committee. The motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #5: Joint Meeting with the Essex Energy Committee

The Energy committee wanted to meet together with us, to explore the ways we can work to achieve the goals we have in common; i.e., at a high level working on climate change. And on a broader level helping the whole community to make improvements in transportation, renewable energy, and efficiencies – heating primarily.

Transportation discussion. It was determined that e-bikes are a way to help with decreasing our carbon footprint. Encouragement to use your bikes to get to town sites for recreation, when possible. It was noted that at the trail heads in town we do not have bike racks. We'll look into those. It was also noted

that it would facilitate residents if there were maps of the trails, sidewalks, and footpaths in the town on the web site so they could be downloaded for ease of use.

Forest management: We discussed the town's forest management plan, that was put together by Chuck Vile, town forester, and Ethan Tapper (Chittenden County Forester), and our staff Darren Schibler. We have some serious issues with the gypsy moth and the emerald ash borer in our forests. This will cost some money.

Dunn made a motion, seconded by Jackson, to have a presentation to the Selectboard at their next meeting to add in to the new budget for 2023 the monies needed for emerald ash borer treatment. The motion passed 5-0. Botula and Jackson will do the presentation.

AGENDA ITEM #6: Minutes

Botula made a motion, seconded by Clark, to approve the minutes from July 13, August 10, and September 14. The motion passed 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #7: Ash Tree Re-Inventory

Mapping of the Forests: we also have a problem with the gypsy moth. We need to know where are the areas that have abundant egg cases. Rationale is if we have another dry spring and all these egg cases open up the trees will experience more stress. By plotting the areas density we would be able to spray the crowns of the trees more efficiently to eradicate the pest.

AGENDA ITEM #8: Adopt-a-Tree

As trees in our town have to be replaced, they will need care. We are hoping to have our residents take over the maintenance of the new trees – watering and fertilizing it as needed. When a family does this they will get a packet for identify that individual or the family's name. Painting the names of all involved in the care on a tree tag, commemorative sign, or rock set at the base of the tree.

AGENDA ITEM #9: Development Review

1. One development in the town for Essex Rescue, which is relocating to exit 10 on VT-289. They will be across from the Freeman Woods senior housing by the Links at Lang Farm. A site check for obstruction of line of sight for ambulances and people using the Essex transportation path connecting to Country side in the village to the Center was done. Landscaping and signage will not obstruct visibility of pedestrians.
2. The LaFountains are requesting the Planning Commission to approve a PUD-R with reduced frontage requirements to allow subdivision of a lot they wish to develop at 109 Brigham Hill Rd (including a boundary adjustment with 113 Brigham Hill Road. There will be a site visit next Thursday at 5:15 followed by the planning commission meeting at 6:30. There are many issues to be resolved. This was a site of an apple orchard and there are wetlands involved.

AGENDA ITEM #10: Reading File

There was no discussion on the Reading File.

Botula adjourned the meeting at 9:02 PM.

Minutes submitted by Besty Dunn, Clerk

Minutes approved November 9, 2021