

TOWN OF ESSEX, VERMONT
81 MAIN STREET, ESSEX JUNCTION, VERMONT 05452

Fax: 878-1353 • E-mail: manager@essex.org • Website: www.essex.org

CONSERVATION & TRAILS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, May 20, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Christine Hammer - Chair, Mike Spaeder, Diana Wood - Secretary (arrived late), Casey Clark, Alan Botula - Vice Chair, Chuck Vile in attendance

with Darren Schibler, the Town Planner

Hammer called the meeting to order at 6:33pm

Public Comments

None

Darren Schibler mentions at this time that CCTV has offered to post all the meeting recordings their website and YouTube Channel for as long as they can. Members can confirm that agree to this to Schibler individually.

Agenda Changes and Approval

No changes to the agenda

Approval of Minutes

Hammer asks if there were any changes. There were none. Botula made motion to approve, Hammer seconds, all approved.

Final Spring Clean-Up Day Preparations

Hammer updates that she had sent emails to folks, but hasn't heard back from most. Still need to get the key from Parks & Recreation get access to additional tools. Hammer thinks that perhaps the gate attendant can help if it is staffed. Allie Vile told her that gate attendant can help and will let volunteers into the park at no charge.

Schibler confirmed that Scouts will be there. Hammer says that Chuck Vile will lead that crew further into the park, with assistance from Mike Spaeder. Botula has been assigned oversight of cutting off the roots from all the pulled plants. Discussion of where the pulled trees can be placed for pick up. Clark will work with Botula. Hammer will bring a sign up sheet and to collect emails. She will also do a brief opening remark. Hammer also reminds volunteers to mark their own tools and bring bug spray.

Hammer states that we never specified a rain date, and since the following weekend is Memorial Day weekend, we'll keep the single day. Schibler reminds members to post on their Front Porch Forums about the event. Spaeder asks if volunteers will be given a quick "how to" demonstration. Hammer explains that yes, that is part of the program and we encourage groups

to stay together. She suggests that committee members to wear something orange to identify us.

Hammer asks Spaeder if he can be the point person for any trail care-taker program questions or interest. Hammer will bring paperwork for it. Schibler offers to bring handouts for invasive species, but Hammer says she can bring some from her collection.

Committee to meet at 12:30. The event is scheduled to begin at 1pm.

Tree planting update

Schibler says the event will take place on June 10 at 9 am. Two trees will be planted. Tree species include an American hornbeam and a swamp white oak. Second grade class will do the planting. Heritage Tree Care donated its service for prep-work. Horsford Nursery donated a tree along with additional funds from grants. The event may be live streamed via Facebook. Hammer to write up the press release.

Botula mentions that the school will handle some of the press, we can augment their efforts. He will confirm everything with Heritage. Schibler confirms that Heritage will bring the trees. Botula asks about all the additional materials. Schibler explains that will all be provided. Hammer asks if anyone else from the Town will be there. Botula will not be able to be there; can another committee member attend. Hammer believes she can join. Botula wants to be sure that the Horsford, Heritage, VT Community Forest and US Forest Service get recognized. The school will help water the new trees. Hammer asks if mentioning the Teacher would be good. Botula clarifies that the lead teacher is Carly Epstein, the Principal has been very supportive as well.

Botula gives a **Tree City update**. Notes that one portion of the requirement was the proclamation that Schibler wrote. The draft Tree Ordinance has been initially reviewed, and will be presented next month. After that it will be forwarded to all town departments to review, town attorney and then Selectboard for adoption.

Street Tree Planting Update

Heartwood will plant trees tomorrow. Those are the last work items for the Grant. Schibler will write up a report and it will be reviewed at next meeting before submittal. Schibler notes it was real community effort with lots of partners.

There was an intern interested in re-inventory of the ash trees to update the specimen trees and conditions of others. Botula notes that it would good to start after the Clean up Day. Discussion of the logistics of this and working in partnership with Chuck Vile, and the intern can help with more of the data compilation and writeup perhaps. Schibler notes they might be used to make the data updates with Chuck Vile in the field. Botula agrees that would good for them do the hands on work, and that it would be a good experience for the student. The student's availability ends early June. Schibler can help organize the effort. Botula asks to help once the dates are set.

Botula asks if we planned to treat the specimen ash trees this summer. Schibler comments that it should be done earlier ideally, but it can be later before the fall. Funding is still pending. This topic can be discussed when the tree ordinance is presented to Selectboard.

Adopt-A-Tree

Botula sent an email update to the group with background on other programs and how they work. One community had tags that identified the tree as being cared for by certain people. Botula thinks it would be a good idea to contact nearby families or business. Hammer notes that this can be for newly planted trees and existing trees. Botula adds that it would be a good opportunity to educate the community about tree care and that it would be good to have information present on the town website. Schibler agrees that it can be posted there, along with the map of trees. Need to determine what the responsibilities of the caretakers would be. The committee can create welcome packets and tree identifiers. Schibler comments that perhaps Parks & Rec can work with youth to create tags, OR possibly apply for a small grant to cover the costs.

In order to make this happen, we need the list of trees. Schibler will look through VT Community Forestry for additional info for the packets.

Development Review

50-52 Pinecrest Drive

Parcel subdivision for two existing houses. Low impact.

34 River Rd - Autumn Harp Warehouse Facility

Adding chiller units to the back. Public Works had noted at the Planning Commission meeting that they need to ensure they are monitoring wastewater and that it is properly pre-treated.

137 Towers Rd

PUD Review 5 lot subdivision. Their request was denied because it didn't fit the plan of a PUD, nor does it meet criteria for a conventional development. Planning Commission will recommend they can do two lots, but not the additional three.

26 Woodside Drive

Former juvenile correction facility. New building for mental health recovery facility. 16 beds, 50 employees. It was approved. It was requested to put a crosswalk in across Rt 15, but was denied.

Next week consent agenda meeting to include:

15 Corporate Drive - Cabinetry Company

Minor expansion. No changes to landscaping, buffer or trails

Reading File

Schibler points out the Lamoille River Tactical Basin plan is underway. In Essex that includes the Browns River only.

There is a new wetlands screening tool available.

Hammer called the meeting called to end at 7:57pm