

Guilford Conservation Commission Meeting December 17, 2015

Attending: Linda Hecker, Linda Lembke, Marli Rabinowitz, Susan James, Bevan Quinn, Bill Jewell, Rory Lincoln, Karen Murphy, Gabby Ciuffreda

Not Attending: Gordon Little

Guest: David Gessner

Meeting called to order at 5:05 PM.

On motion the agenda items were adjusted by moving the discussion of the Weeks Forest Trail and general discussion of trails to the top of the agenda. The natural resources inventory was moved to come after the budget discussion.

The October 15, 2015 meeting minutes were accepted with a small amendment.

We welcomed David Gessner who wants to volunteer as the lead in a trails committee. He will work with the commission until a separate trails committee can be organized. Gabby has contact info from a recent select board meeting where a group of Guilford residents are interested in forming a Recreation Committee which would include trails. Linda Lembke has a list of folks who signed up for trails on the Rural Development Grant as well as the Walk List. Linda Lembke thinks that we may be able to coordinate with the Pitstoppers snow mobilers who have a good system in place for obtaining land owners permission. The New England Forestry Foundation has good guidelines for trails including varied uses.

The commission members are most interested in trails that bar ATV use and in some cases mountain biking (wetland areas).

#### Weeks Forest Update

To be done this winter: Work with partners to identify forest, wildlife, and cultural features.

Identify the final trail, signpost and bench sites.

Develop map and descriptive brochure.

Finish heavy trail work when ground freezes (snow dependent).

David Gessner will join the Weeks Forest Working group. Thank you, David.

#### Budget:

After much discussion the members voted in favor of two motions. The first was to ask for the annual \$500 appropriation. The second is to ask for \$3000 to help establish a sinking fund for the proposed natural resources inventory. This amount was approved by the select board this fall as a matching fund for a municipal planning grant. See next.

Susan James reported that the Municipal Planning Grant application was not accepted this year. (There were many applicants and less money this round.) John Bennett from the WRC said that the application was the best he's seen, but most of the grants were for Town Plan updates. He said we should apply again next year. Given this disappointing news we may have to consider applying for some smaller grants (Orton Foundation and VT Community Foundation). Susan has some other grant possibilities. Given that the inventory may have to be done in steps the following were suggested:

Step 1 Look at digital maps and identify most critical areas.

Step 2 Community outreach

Step 3 Field work (most expensive)

Inventory subcommittee: Susan James, Bill Jewell, Marli Rabinowitz, Karen Murphy

Review of Town Plan Actions:

Green River Corridor Plan:

Linda Lembke reported that some of the Actions in the 2015 Town Plan relating to floodplain protection and the Green River Corridor Plan will now be handled by Steve Lembke, who was recently appointed to the new position of Guilford Floodplain Coordinator.

Conservation Easements and Current Use:

We discussed a future panel discussion on these subjects for Guilford citizens and will contact Joan Weir (Vermont Land trust) and Bill Guenther (Windham County Forester) to inquire about their availability. Information about estate planning could be included in this context.

Designating the Green River as Class A1 status:

We will contact Marie Caduto (ANR) about this in January.

The Learning Collaborative in Dummerston will house the natural resources library, starting with Bill Guenther's collection. We could add our small natural resources book collection.

Reports of meetings attended: Some of us attended the joint CCs meeting in Brattleboro. Each commission reported on their activities. One of the complaints was that town officials do not pay much, if any, attention to their work. Linda Lembke caught everyone's attention by reporting that we have a member of the select board attend each of our meetings.

Linda Lembke attended the Deerfield River Watershed meeting and was impressed by a speaker who compared Tropical Storm Irene's impact to previous big storms. She suggested that we may want him to make a presentation to the area community.

January 1<sup>st</sup> is the Gazette deadline. Linda Hecker will write an article combining Jeff Nugent's reports on Windham County forest resources and the Natural Resources Inventory as a cornerstone for town planning. Her suggested title is "Forests and Floods."

The Miller Road to the Bullock House walk on December 13<sup>th</sup> was attended by about 15 people. The next walk will be to the Roaring Brook Wildlife Management Area on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM.

Next meeting is January 21<sup>st</sup> at 5 PM in the town office.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Murphy

Guilford Conservation Commission Clerk