

**MINUTES**  
**Underhill Conservation Commission**  
**July 13, 2020**  
**Remote Meeting on GoToMeeting**

**Present:** Karen McKnight, Steve Webster, Nancy McRae, Daphne Tanis, Amy Golodetz, Betsy Chapek, Pat Lamphere, Laurie Graham,

**Absent:** Peter Hiskes,

**Guests:** Sandy Wilmot, David Demarest

**6:30 p.m. Welcome** Karen McKnight welcomed all and led the meeting.

**6:31 p.m. Public Comment** None

**6:32 p.m. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of 6/8/20 Regular Meeting Minutes with changes- Steve motions to approve the minutes and Daphne seconds. Committee approves the minutes by a vote of 8-0.

**6:35 p.m. Preferred sites Mapping for siting Sandy Wilmot of renewable energy generation facilities**

Sandy Wilmot is introduced as a member of the Planning Commission with a forestry background. Sandy discusses the Renewable Energy Siting and the mapping. To do this siting, they are still working from the 2015 Town Plan because there is not an approved 2020 town plan; in the 2015 plan there is a call to increase usage of renewable energy by reviewing town regulations to determine if they are flexible enough to accommodate renewable energy sources in identified sites. They are completing the mapping to figure out the "identified sites." The 2020 plan is much more specific. The State's new energy standards Act 174 was passed four years ago; if towns include enough info in their town plan, and if there is a developer who wants to work in town, the town would have a stronger voice in determining if that plan can go forward. The goal is to create a clear map where the sites are locally that we feel are preferred sites, and the state has their own set of mapping criteria. In the 2015 plan, the Planning Commission was to consult with the Conservation Commission and Energy Committee on this project. Sandy Wilmot and Val Story are working on this project and going through the spatial data map layers the state has available.

**6:40 p.m. Crane Brook Conservation District Discussion**

**Bridge update - Steve / Karen** The boardwalk bridge, donated by Mike Wiesel, has been installed with a coordinated effort of the Recreation Committee. The trail near the new boardwalk bridge has been rerouted to avoid the wet area. Trail markers did not have to be moved and the old trail was blocked off with a few branches.

**Mowing - Karen** Karen Mcknight has spoken to Anton Kelsey about the mowing. Daphne confirms it has not yet been mowed.

**Japanese Knotweed Monitoring Discussion** Steve Webster has gone out to the knotweed patch at the CBCD every week on schedule at least 4 people every time, one volunteer from Jericho has come twice. There are 4-6 patches from the town garage into the upper end of crane brook that have been cut but not dug, but the cutting seems to be helping.

The stalks in the ½ inch hardware cloth will be very large before girdling. Steve suggests using ¼ inch so that the plants avoid putting energy back into their root systems. David Demarest suggests using some ½ inch hardware cloth and some ¼ inch cloth in one area, as a control variable to compare each size.

UCC will apply hardware cloth to the Japanese Knotweed in the Beartown Road gravel pit in the future.

**Karen McKnight will contact Nate Sullivan about the patch near the solar panel.**

**Steve will look into the mesh ¼ inch and email out once he has it. Steve will order and let Karen know the cost.**

Willow and dogwood plantings at CBCD did not have success and most all seemed to die. They may take better at another time of year, or it may have been that the planting happened during a period of no rain.

Peter Bennett emailed an update coming from VT Invasives site written by Angela Shortsleeve.

Steve found some [Bishops/Goutweed](#) right outside the town garage and pulled what they could. Karen suggests covering with cardboard in addition to black plastic for more than one season. Betsy mentions that she digs up the Bishops weed and frequently digs to remove roots and places in the burn pile. Steve has also noticed a lot of [honeysuckle](#) near his property.

Discussion about other purchases, in addition to 1/4inch hardware cloth include a Weed Wrench. David Demarest suggests using online FarmTek for purchases.

**Karen will research/purchase the weed wrench.**

The UCC Also budgeted for 4x4s to re-install the sign on Crane Brook Road.

**Amy will check with Jen for the amount budgeted for this purchase.**

### **Trails guidelines Betsy / Amy**

Betsy and Amy present their proposal and brainstorming for Trail Guidelines and Signage for the CBCD, following the 1995 Stewardship Statement and the Vermont Trail Ethic guidelines. This plan includes ideas for use policies, education opportunities and signage. David Demarest emphasizes private property in the area. Amy responds that the creation of the map will be important in seeing all the private property in the area, as well as signage about “staying on trails.”

Betsy and Amy propose a new trail called The Link, exclusively for bikers and horses. This area would connect the roads in the area and will go near the Town Garage. **Betsy will talk with Nate Sullivan about this trail.**

Discussion continues about the existing and past trails in the area, including the trail to the school. David Demarest asks that the committee be very transparent with landowners about trails that might connect through their property in that there will be no maintenance and no picking up of litter. The trails handbook could be a guide that could be modified for 2020. David Demarest discusses ratifying the best management practices that were not passed by the selectboard at the time that David Demarest resigned from the trails committee.

Continuing discussion about bike vs. walking trails, the purpose of conservation and improving unique resources. Karen believes there may be pushback on restrictions for bikes to certain trails. Steve shares his screen of the map he has made using his GPS work. Stewardship statement suggest improving unique resources. It is suggested that a member of the Recreation Committee should be present as we consider trails involving bikes. Continued discussion about the usefulness of the proposed trail, The Link. Future possibility could be a tour with a phone. **Karen will contact Anton to find out when the Recreation Committee meetings are.**

### **Kiosks, Trail Maintenance, Signage Discussion**

Karen and Anton spoke when installing the boardwalk and he mentioned that the Recreation Committee would like to help or take over maintenance of the trails, work on kiosks and signage. We could propose ideas for the kiosk and have some signage prototypes available for when we go to their meeting. **(Daphne, Betsy and Amy.)** Anton is also looking into the port-o-potty.

### **7:49 p.m. Plant Sale Betsy / Daphne**

Betsy and Daphne share their proposal for a fall Plant Sale and Silent Auction tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 12 from 9-12pm. Betsy checked with Sherri Morrin who believed the event would fit with COVID-19 protocol as long as it is outside and all guidelines are followed.

The day would include a plant sale, run as normal, with some restrictions. As well as a silent auction with donated items. The funds from the sale would go toward the invasive species elimination work within the town.

Discussion continues about "one-way" pedestrian traffic for the auction/sale, a tented auction area, masks required and checks/cash handling.

**Betsy will continue this work and present more about traveling within the auction/plant sale. Karen and Amy will also help with planning/finding donations for auction. Betsy will contact Ryan Oches about chestnut trees. Daphne will plan for the bidding sheet.**

**7:54 p.m. Other**

Amy mentions the displaced boulder by the Town Garage. Karen has talked to Brad, who will talk to Nate. David Demarest mentions property access and litigation.

**Next Meeting: August 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

**8:00 p.m. Adjourn**

Minutes submitted by Laurie Graham.