

MINUTES
Underhill Conservation Commission
January 13, 2020
Underhill Town Hall

Present: Karen McKnight, Dan Steinbauer, Betsy Chapek, Peter Hiskes, Steven Webster, Daphne Tanis, Laurie Graham

Absent: Pat Lamphere, Nancy McRae, Amy Golodetz

Public Comment: None

Welcome and Opening Remarks: Karen welcomed and led meeting.

Approval Minutes: 12/16/19 approved with changes.

Time: 6:30pm - 7:55pm

UCC Budget: Tools

- Brian and Anton Kelsey spoke about sharing space and keeping UCC-purchased hand tools at shed at Town Pond.
- Dan reminds about need for Weed Wrench.
- Might not be able to purchase a chainsaw or trimmer due to maintenance and liability.
- Town Garage has loppers we could borrow; might be a good idea to see what the town already owns and work out a system for Work Days.
- Possibility of sharing tools with Recreation Committee?
- Budget will carry over if it is not used.

Natural Resources Section of Town Plan:

- Submitted section to Andrew. According to Andrew, Planning Commission began, accepted to some recommendations, changed some and rejected some. After some more edits of the section, Andrew will send out an update. Karen will forward to UCC when she receives it.
- Acknowledgement for Amy Golodetz for her work on the Town Plan Natural Resources section.

Winter Education Series:

Film: Betsy posted to FPF and has been in touch with Town Hall and Erik VanEck at the Library. Steve is helping get a purchased film on flash drive. Film on CD drive will be fine as long as we have a computer to play it. Screen at the Town Hall has been damaged and is not for borrow, but Andrew will set up at Town Hall for us. Rehearsal for set-up practice. Betsy will send outline purchase from invoice to Town Hall for reimbursement. Betsy has flyers. Erik VanEck put blurb in January DRML newsletter. No refreshments, keeping it simple, time for discussion after the film. Expanding reach on FPF to other towns or conservation commissions. Friends of the Deborah Rawson Library gave half of the cost of the second movie by donating \$125. Karen will put the film series in the Town Report.

January 28 @ DRML: Last Straw

February 18 @ DRML: Biggest Little Farm

March 12 @ Town Hall: Rivers and Tides

Speakers- Beavers: February 13 @ 6:30 at Town Hall, presenter will be one of the state wildlife biologists, Kim Royar or Chris Bernier. Flyer has been started. Action Items: UCC will set-up at 6pm, Daphne will work on Audio/Visual and contact Andrew about screen set-up, Laurie will be Greeting/Getting Emails, Betsy and Daphne will put up fliers, Karen will post to FPF, Daphne will put out sandwich board, Karen will contact other Conservation Commissions.

Speakers- Coyotes: March 24, Betsy will be in touch with more information at next meeting.

Invasive Species:

- Steve has stepped down as the head of Invasive Species Task Force sub committee.
- Suggested bringing Task Force items back into Conservation Commission to lower the amount of separate meeting times, many attendees were already UCC members.

- Future plan ideas: Expand focus to other invasive species where we can be successful. Keep working on knotweed at Crane Brook.

Crane Brook:

- Tina Heath, district wetlands ecology, believes based on photos of stream bank needing to be stabilized that there are wetlands on either side. Since using gravel to stabilize in a wetland area would fall under state jurisdiction, she suggests planting woody plants to stabilize bank.
- Steve has been working on map for Crane Brook.
- Next meeting, provide update on Crane Brook Trails and work with Recreation Committee to tie into Steve's map work
- Future upgrade to trail signs to show where you are. Betsy will be in touch with someone who might be willing to create additional, artistic signs.
- In the future, it would be great to link the trail to connect to the Elementary school. Steve has had good communication with many of these landowners that may be open to this conversation.

UCC Town Report:

- Include information about Invasive Species sub-committee work volunteer hours, work days and meetings in the Town Report.
- Karen will add movie dates and presentations.

Other Information:

- Transition Towns: Transitioning environmental/sustainable system in the face of climate change. Chairs on Conservation Commissions, meetings and group events have been beneficial.
- West Branch Nature Center in Montpelier: Suggestion to go as a group when there is a program in spring.
- Lamoille County Conservation District: working with conservation, sustainable agriculture and art.
- **Town Meeting Day:**
 - Educational posterboard planning. Nancy has told Karen she is willing to work on it. Dan is able to have the supplies for the Forest Pests, emerald ash borer, display.
 - Daphne will be there to connect with the public about work done by UCC.
 - Posterboard focus idea on Crane Brook: trails, knotweed, work with Recreation Committee.
- Dan will not seek UCC reappointment, so there will be one vacancy but will still enlist help for work with forest pests and emerald ash borer (EAB) plan work.
 - EAB: May be important to have a plan as a commission for EAB so that we can support landowners and their care of ash trees. Town ash trees and trees on town right-of-way will be the town's responsibility. Dan has talked to some firewood workers and they are prepared for EAB and changes that may occur about moving firewood if EAB is found in Underhill.
- Karen asks Dan for an update on boulders on the Crane Brook Trail, Dan believes the boulders will stay.
- Next time, hear from Patrick about more about Abenaki Traditions/Culture and planting; this could be a series or item.

Adjournment at 7:55pm.