

**Conservation Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2019**

Present: Ken Denton, Dawn Andrews, Gary Gulka, Chris Duff, Cedric Alexander

Next Meeting: **February 10, 2020, 7:00 PM**

Draft minutes of October 21 approved without changes

Public Comment

No public comment

Cabot School Climate Change Initiative

The Committee met with Thomas Dunbar, Cabot School science teacher to discuss a high school course now being offered on climate change, energy use, and civic engagement. There are about 13 students in grades 9-12 in the course. One of the initiatives is developing a resolution for town meeting day related to the town's commitment to addressing climate change. The course content will include global issues, United Nations actions, the science of climate, and political aspects of climate change. Students will also be involved in an energy audit of the school. A public presentation/exhibition will occur at the end of the trimester in early March. The committee indicated that it would be willing to help in providing information for the class and suggested that there be a strong component focusing on practical things that the community can do to address climate change. The committee also welcomed student participation in the Conservation Committee's projects. It was agreed that we would maintain communications to encourage student involvement.

Public Outreach

It was agreed that the next Chronicle article (due January 15) will focus on the benefits of leaving brush (the mess) in logging/tree cutting operations. Future articles include invasive plants, emerald ash borer, forest fragmentation, and natural resource inventory and mapping work to be undertaken by the committee (if grants are received).

It was agreed that we will start a monthly column in the Cabot Chronicle to answer questions posed by the public on conservation issues. The next step is to come up with a title for the column ways to solicit questions from the public.

We have been approached to co-sponsor a public showing of the PBS NewsHour documentary, *The Plastics Problem*, along with a public discussion to follow. Gary will follow up on this.

Town Meeting Grant Application Status

An application was submitted to CCIF for preliminary natural resource inventory work on natural communities and outreach and assistance to landowners on managing their properties with nature in mind and in regard to natural communities on their property (approx. \$7000). If the application meets CCIF criteria, it will be scheduled for a public hearing. The application will be voted on during Town Meeting Day (Australian ballot). The Committee will need to publicize the application and the benefits to the town through Front Porch Forum posts, Cabot Chronicle, Hardwick Gazette and flyers, and any other opportunities.

Budget Request for FY 21

Gary will follow up on funding remaining for this fiscal year with Town Clerk's office and any information needed by the Select Board.

Creating a Conservation Resource Section in the Cabot Library

It was agreed that the committee should consider developing a conservation resource library that could house books and other publications for the general public if funding allows. Gary will check with the Cabot Library to see if this is logistically possible to have a section or shelf of the library available for this purpose.

New Business

Vermont DEC Watershed Grants are due on February 9. Funding would be available for wetlands inventory work (up to \$3500) and outreach and education (up to \$5000). It was agreed that we should pursue an application.