

**Conservation Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2021**

Present: Dawn Andrews, Gary Gulka, Roland Payne, Jr., Chris Duff, Jim Wolynetz, Frank Kampf

Next Meeting: **March 8, 7:00 PM**

This meeting was held via tele-video conference in accordance with state open meeting statutes for electronic meetings.

Draft minutes of January 11 approved without changes.

Public Comment

Frank Kampf said that he was attending the meeting to hear about the emerald ash borer management plan.

Follow-up on Natural Communities Project

- Gary will work to get the natural communities report and meeting recording posted on the town web site and post the availability on Front Porch Forum
- Gary will contact Matt Peters to find out status of landowner contact for permission to share information with Natural Heritage Program
- Hard copies of the report will be produced still need to be made for library, Town Clerk's Office, Cabot Library, and some members of the Committee.
- We will contact staff in the Natural Heritage Program to ask about funding possibilities to continue the project and seek out additional funding sources.

Plant Sale Update

Plant sale catalog will be available in near future. Due date for orders is March 26. When Jim gets the information, we will publicize the sale in the march issue of the Cabot Chronicle and Front Porch Forum, and plant sale flyers will be placed at locations in town.

Water Wise Woodlands Project Update

The steering committee is still working on the details for conducting focus groups with landowners to better understand what will motivate landowners to engage in flood resiliency efforts/projects on their land.

Ash Borer Management Plan Update

Roland has been in contact with the Town about development of the ash borer management plan. Mike Hogan and Aldo Nunn will participate along with Roland in the plan development process with Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Roland will keep the Committee posted on progress. Frank Kampf asked whether Class IV roads and McKinstry Rd would be included in the plan for ash tree inventory and removal. Roland replied in the affirmative that it will be included up to the Ginette residence. There was discussion of management of infected trees that are removed. Chipping is acceptable as well as local use for firewood but transport off-site is to be avoided. Chris indicated chipped ash trees could be used by compost facilities.

Public Outreach

- The article on northern white cedar swamps will appear in the March issue of the Chronicle.
- A webinar is planned for March 16 entitled *Clean Water in Your Backyard: What You Can Do to Improve Water Quality in the Upper Winooski Watershed*. We have agreed to co-sponsor and promote this along with the Plainfield and Marshfield Conservation Commissions. Presenter will be Kristen Balschunat of the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District. The current plan is to present the webinar mid-day and have the recorded meeting available. This webinar also dovetails with the public outreach efforts of the Water Wise Woodlands project.
- There was a brief discussion about the need to establish a way to make recorded webinars easily accessible to Cabot residents, such as YouTube.
- The Committee will begin to plan for a spring ephemerals walk in the woods in late April/early May. We will continue to discuss a location for the walk and finding a naturalist to lead the walk. Sunday morning was suggested. Bob Popp and Brett Engstrom will be contacted initially. Chris asked to forward the names of any individuals who might be able to lead the walk and he will make contacts.
- It was suggested that the Committee plan a presentation in the fall on emerald ash borer identification and management and this was generally supported.

Priorities for Coming Year

- We discussed 2021 Work Plan Ideas that was presented at the last meeting. It was generally agreed that these work plan ideas/projects were appropriate.
- It was agreed that we would include under Outreach and Education, a continuing effort to educate residents about natural communities.
- It was also agreed that we should better define an ongoing effort to educate residents on invasive species and management. It was suggested that given the prevalence of invasive species that we should make it a priority to address invasive species on some of the more significant natural communities in town.
- It was agreed that we should reach out to the Planning Commission to offer our input on any ongoing work that they are involved with. Gary will contact Jen Miner, the chair of the Planning Commission.
- It was agreed that even though the Town Plan may not be up for renewal for several years, we should start reviewing the Natural Heritage section and future issues like forest blocks that will have to be addressed.
- Molly's Falls Pond State Park – coordinate with Planning Commission to arrange for a meeting with Dept. of Forests, Parks, & Recreation to find out status of their plans for the park. Gary will contact Jen Miner of the Planning Commission.