

**Conservation Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021**

Present: Dawn Andrews, Gary Gulka, Roland Payne, Jr., Jim Wolynetz,

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

Next Meeting: **May 10, 7:00 PM**

Draft minutes of March 8 approved without changes.

Public Comment

No public comment

Follow-up on Natural Communities Project

Gary still needs to post the natural communities report and public meeting recording on the town web site. Also need to make several hard copies of the report for the library, town clerk's office and members of the committee.

Plant Sale Update

Jim provided an update on the plant sale results. Preliminary results are that this was a record year for plant sales and participants, with 56 participants. At least 18 participants were a result of Cabot's efforts and perhaps more from out of town. The average amount of plant sales in the past has been \$3605. This year it is \$5389. The average split in revenue between Marshfield and Plainfield Conservation Commissions in the past has been \$677. This year it is \$1155. It was noted that Cabot agreed not to share in profits from the sale this year.

Water Wise Woodlands Project Update

A focus group meeting was held via Zoom with about 8 woodland owners in the three towns to get a better idea of what would incentivize woodland owners to take action to improve water quality and flood resiliency. There were three participants from Cabot including Dawn. A few days ago, the steering committee for the project held a Zoom meeting to review and discuss the results of the focus group meeting. Some preliminary results included focusing on smaller landowners in future outreach; provide direct on-site technical assistance to identify actions that can be taken; encourage adjoining landowners to collaborate on management and prioritize technical assistance to these landowners; and to develop a useful resource guide to woodland owners on technical and financial assistance resources. Participants of the focus group meeting will be asked to find neighboring landowners to collaborate with as a way to pilot technical assistance. Dawn said that it would be beneficial for woodland owners to see how problems are solved in the field. She also said that if other focus group meetings are held, there should be more structure to the meetings, rather than being open-ended. She suggested that the plant sale could be used to sell inexpensive bundles of plants for riparian plantings.

Ash Borer Management Plan Update

Roland said that Ashley Andrews of Central VT Regional Planning Commission has prepared a map of the roadside ash tree inventory that Roland conducted, and she is currently working on the draft management plan. Once the draft is completed it will be shared with the Select Board.

Roland will be getting some purple traps to place in the southern end of town to monitor the spread of the ash borer, which generally spreads out 1.5 to 2 miles per year. Traps need to be monitored about a half dozen times during the warm weather season and any insects captured in the traps are collected and sent away for analysis.

EV Charging Station Status

Jim provided an update of the discussion at the last Select Board meeting regarding EV charging station. Jim was not able to find an electrician to volunteer time to install, but the Select Board contacted Aaron Celley who agreed to discount his hourly rate to do the work. Jim will provide him the specifications. About \$1100 has been raised and it is possible that another \$500 is needed. Jim said that public donations can be sent to him – by writing a check to the Town of Cabot, referencing the EV charging station on the check, and mailing to him at 3393 Main Street.

Jim also discussed EV charging station directional signs that the State would install on roads. Jim hopes that signs can be placed at Rt 2 and 215 in Marshfield, the intersection of Rt 15 and 215, and South Walden Rd and Rt 15. There will also be signs in town and the town may have to purchase the sign at the station itself. He is still hoping that the project can be completed by the fall.

Public Outreach

Need to find out the time for the May 15 wildflower walk at the Town Forest and advertise in the coming weeks.

It was agreed that we would submit an article for the June issue of the Cabot Chronicle (due date May 15) on pollinators and plants. Jim will look for an existing article that we can get permission to publish. Roland also suggested the Vermont Coverts presentation on pollinators as a source of information. Roland will do a companion article on the importance of native plants in landscaping.

New Business

Discussion of planting additional trees on the green. Roland mentioned the dead elm tree that will need to be replaced. He is also looking for some help in mulching the existing trees planted at the Willey Building, village green and rec field. It was suggested that we consider purchasing some red oaks locally to plant this year using funds in our budget.