

**Conservation Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
February 14, 2022**

Present: Gary Gulka, Roland Payne, Jr., Chris Duff, Dawn Andrews, Cedric Alexander

Next Meeting: **March 14, 7:00 PM**

Draft minutes of January 10 approved without changes.

Public Comment

No public comment

Project Updates

Gary is working with Michelle in Town Clerk's Office to post the natural communities study and public presentation on town web site. Meeting minutes are now posted on the town web site.

**Actions and Next Steps: Post natural communities study and public presentation on the town web site.**

Conservation Corner article on beavers was not included in the last issue of the Chronicle due to space limitations; it will appear in the next issue.

Use of ARPA funds for further work on natural communities study should be presented to Select Board.

**Actions and Next Steps: Gary will make a request to the Select Board on ARPA funding.**

Town Report shows audited expenditures by the Conservation Committee as \$3000. This would appear to exceed our budgeted amount.

**Actions and Next Steps: Gary will check with Town Clerk for explanation of expenditures.**

Conservation Plant Sale

At this point, everything is in order for our participation in the plant sale with Plainfield and Marshfield. Cedric will be meeting with Ann Miller on March 15. Plant sorting is scheduled for April 22 and customer pickup is scheduled for April 24. Cedric may assist with pickup of plants at the Intervale. Chris said that he may be able to assist Cedric.

Ash Borer Management Plan

The draft plan was reviewed, and significant progress has been made in developing the budget and plan for tree removal. There are several edits that need to be made. Cedric and Roland plan to meet to review and edit the draft for readability and clarity.

The following are specific comments discussed:

- Change reference to the Figure 1 map in the text to state map rather than Washington County

- Options section: add some introductory text to clarify
- Reactive management option: mention that it can be a safety hazard to road travel and property
- Strategic Plan section: Clarify by adding some introductory text in this section and clarify the town plan references
- Pie chart needs to be modified/replaced
- Ash tree inventory table: identify Class IV roads using the VTrans town highway map for Cabot
- Clarify the Town Road Crew and Contractor priorities 1 and 2
- Move Management section to appear prior to the Priority section
- Add language that leaving ash trees less than 6 inches may provide disease some disease resistant ash trees for the future
- Under management strategy: acknowledge this is a moving target as more trees become infected and progress toward hazard trees; some oversight/monitoring by the road crew will be necessary. Electric utilities will probably remove trees in their rights-of-way which will potentially reduce costs and workload for town
- Agreement to budget \$25,000 per year for town road crew and contractor removal
- Roland will be re-inventorying the 79 trees greater than 20 inches to get a more accurate account of actual size, condition, and location. This may change the costing for contractor removal of ash trees

It was agreed that implementation costs of the management plan could be a good candidate for ARPA funding, and this should be discussed with the Select Board when we present them with a draft plan.

**Actions and Next Steps:**

- **Cedric to review plan for readability and clarity and meet with Roland**
- **Roland to re-inventory the larger ash trees**
- **Revised draft plan to be prepared and discussed at next meeting**