

**Cabot Conservation Committee**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**  
**November 13, 2023**

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

Next Meeting: **To be determined.**

Draft minutes of October 9 approved without changes.

Public Comment

None

Project Updates

Flood Resiliency Task Force – A presentation was made to the Select Board on Nov. 7, showing photos of the two tributaries that we have walked.

We have been asked to participate in a community flood discussion and roundtable on November 20.

We will be reaching out to some consultants to help us with a scope of work for characterizing the flooding problems and developing alternatives for flood mitigation.

The Planning Commission has made progress on issuing an RFP to revise Cabot's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. A public hearing for this process needs to be held in December. One of the only dates available for this meeting is December 11 – the date of our next Conservation Committee meeting. We agreed that we would change the date of our December Conservation Committee meeting to accommodate this.

Conservation plant sale – Rose Paul's proposal for next year's plant sale was reviewed and discussed in detail. The Committee voted to discontinue participation in the conservation plant sale with Plainfield and Marshfield Conservation Commissions. Several factors were considered in deciding, including the likelihood of Cabot residents travelling to East Hill, the logistics of the sale, and whether it aligns with our priorities. We have at least \$500 from a flood recovery grant to put towards purchase of native plants for riparian plantings next year and we decided that we would focus locally on this effort and acquiring plants appropriate for this purpose.

Public Outreach and Event Planning

Gary has contacted Tyler Brown about a beaver presentation in January or February and is waiting to hear back.

Town Plan Review

It was agreed that the Natural Heritage section of the Town Plan needs to be shorter and more focused on readability and information that town residents will find interesting and relevant.

Certain factual information in the plan such as soils and descriptions of water bodies will likely be eliminated from the main body of the text.

We will decide what should be emphasized and de-emphasized. Recognizing that wildlife and habitat are topics that will be of general interest, we should be sure to emphasize this in the text, including the new information on the natural resource inventory study and forest blocks/wildlife corridors. Climate change, flood resiliency, and invasive species are topics to emphasize.

We should consider changing the title of this section of the plan to something different than Natural Heritage, since it suggests the past rather than the future.

We discussed the challenges of proposing regulatory provisions to protect and enhance Cabot's natural resources unless public education occurs and community support develops.

Next steps: In the coming months we will work on an outline for the content of the plan, including background information and goals and strategies.

#### New Business

Gary mentioned that he will be attending a Select Board budget meeting and will ask for level funding of \$500 for fiscal year 2025 beginning on July 1, 2024. He will also ask about the status of funding for continuing the natural resource inventory and evaluating forest blocks as required for the next Town Plan update.