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November 20, 2014

Huntington Conservation Commission Minutes  
Thursday, 9 October, 2014  
7:00 pm at Huntington Town Office Lower Level



Members in attendance: Rebecca Ryan, JB Bryan, Darlene Palola, Margaret Fowle and Sheri Lynn

Review and approve minutes from last meeting, review mail

- Ruth has decided not to clerk.
- Margaret will repost on front porch forum and submit final minutes from September 4 meeting
- MOTION: Rebecca made a motion to approve the minutes, JB second. All approved, the motion passes.

No Public Comment

Town Forest

- o Discussion with Bob Heiser from VT Land Trust (VLT)
  - o Signed purchase and sales agreement is needed in order move forward on funding opportunities outside the town conservation fund.
  - o Funding options will need a letter of agreement or site control document that gives the town time for appraisal in hopes of purchasing land (justified by appraiser). Landowner could pay half or VHCB or town.
  - o Appraisal is required for accessing VHSC funds
  - o Cost \$1,500 to \$2,000 for appraisal
  - o Possible funding sources:
    - Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) major source of conservation for farms, community like parks, or town forest.
    - Cap of \$150,000 but recently funded \$100,000.
    - Already spent money for Fiscal Year '15 but money may free up at any time. Bob recommended putting in an application as soon as possible and then we would need to resubmit if necessary.
    - We could try asking for reimbursement but if land is already purchased then it is harder to show need. What if the town took out a loan would that be considered a higher priority? Bob will check.
    - VHCB wants permanent conservation easement where the land trust (or another non-profit entity) is the steward. Sale of land would be approved or denied by the Land Trust requiring continuation of conservation to new owner that purchased it.
    - What about gravel? Depends - maybe portion of property is for town forest and the other for gravel.
    - Would have to get permission by VT Land Trust
    - For any logging activity Town needs management plan down the road - VLT biologist would walk the land for rare natural features on property.

- We need an appraisal if the seller is selling at less than market value. There are tax benefits for the seller that shows an asset at less than appraised value.
- Town could help with purchase and sales or VLT could do it.
- Town needs to have public hearing but Select Board approves. This is not a town meeting agenda item.
- Timeline - Funds are available 3 to 6 months after application which means closing in December 2015 barring not issues along the way.
- There are up-front costs to monitor and enforce easement in perpetuity, plus title search and other documentations: \$20,000-25,000; these would need to be factored into any funding proposal.
- Other funding: Federal Community Land Fund down to 1.7 million for all states. There is also the Land and Water Conservation that paid for playgrounds in the past not many town forests. VT watershed tends to be watershed focus but could try for \$6,000 and no restrictions.

- Next Steps - Ask Select Board for money for appraisal, and give update on the status of the proposed project. Margaret will check with Barbara about getting on October 20 agenda. Rebecca will check in with Roman about being the liaison with Linda (owner/seller) in the process.

- o Look at draft proposal for Conservation Funding- Next agenda

#### Emerald Ash Borer

- o Update and discussion with Bill Menning
  - o Facts: It will arrive. The spread can be slowed. Important to get to infected trees because tree death takes years. Pesticides work but there is a cost \$250 per two years. Asian longhorn beetle attacks maples and could be included in pest management plan. Hemlock Wooley Adelgin <http://www.vtinvasives.org/invaders/images> is a concern. It is 3 times more expensive to remove a dead tree.
  - o Three surveys 33 miles and 12 paved several - There are 1,500 in right of way (out of a few thousand observed by Bill)
  - o Form a pest planning team and complete the survey.
  - o Oct 18 is a tree steward workshop.
  - o Outreach and Education idea - What about an ash borer day to have roads checked out maybe by Boy Scouts. What about the loggers and mark the trees that have to go loggers (probably cannot do anything with logs).
  - o Timeline with ECOS, property/land purchase and pest management team is needed. We will need to prioritize and develop a work plan at the next meeting. Regarding the pest management team and planning, the Commission has an education focus so we may want to include things like posting information in the local paper and an educational outreach plan. We may not be the lead for the pest management team but rather help recruit people.
  - o Bill was be on the team planning. Maybe 8 to 10 members and others to conduct the surveying.

- o Next Step -Future planning needed (agenda item focusing on developing working emphasize the Commissions education agenda and ways to recruit team members).

#### Reports and project updates

- o Storm water event - It was a webinar and there will be 5. Focused on Burlington; protection using the green preventive strategies like grasses and trees; how to build rainwater gardens. Darlene can send recorded webinar.
- o Upcoming AVCC (Association Vermont Conservation Commission) annual meeting on Nov 1 from 8am-4pm in Montpelier. Those that want to go can get reimbursed.
- o MOTION: JB motioned to use funds from the budget to pay for this. Margaret second, all approved, the motion passes.
- o Rules for wild life corridor protection for inclusion in the new zoning sub divisions - Rebecca will check on timeline

#### Other Business

- November Agenda work plan and time line discussion
  1. Town Forest
  2. Ecos report and next steps about ways to use the information,
  3. Ash borer outreach and team recruitment of pest management team
  4. Other priority projects

Ajourne at 9 :00 pm

Minutes Submitted By : Sheri Lynn, October 15, 2014

Approved Minutes Submitted by Margaret Fowle, November 19, 2014