

Minutes of the Thetford Conservation Commission – February 23, 2017 - draft

Present: Li Shen, Bob Pulaski, Libby Chapin, Steve Lehman, Jim McCracken, Jeff Smith, Sue Tallman, Sue Fritz, Ann Lavanway

1. Libby presented the display board for Town Meeting. Jim has handouts about invasive plants to be used for Town Meeting. Li will put out a few walking guides as well. Jim will do the set-up for the Commission at Town Meeting.
2. The education subcommittee has selected a topic for this year's education outreach and it is "The Year of Secret Lives." This year's events will kick off with a presentation by Tim Tynning of Berkshire Community College on March 9th at Thetford Academy. The event will begin with a hands-on exhibit starting at 6PM and the talk will begin at 6:30PM.
3. Libby and Jim talked about other possible education events for this year including "Big Night" and possibly showing a film on the secret lives of trees or plants. Libby reported that another possibility is a speaker who does a presentation about caterpillars. The caterpillar presentation was recommended by Elise Tillinghast. Libby and Jim asked the group to be thinking of ideas for events.
4. The Thetford Historical Society has asked the Commission to co-sponsor a talk by Tom Wessels. Motion: Should the Conservation Commission agree to co-sponsor a talk by Tom Wessels with the Thetford Historical Society and to support the cost to the best of our financial ability (up to \$250)? The Commission voted and the motion was passed.
5. The Taylor Flood Plain Forest birding walk with Dr. George Clark is scheduled for Saturday, May 13th with 7AM start. The rain date is May 14th.
6. The Commission discussed costs and stumpage fees associated with timber harvests on town lands. Li will ask Ehrhard to estimate the cost of the post-harvest invasive plant treatment that will be needed on the Town Forest.
7. The representative from the glider club reported to Li that they have not been able to find loggers who will cut the trees they would like cut on PMNA. Li is waiting to hear back from the club about their plans.
8. Jeff reported that Chad Whitcomb of the Thetford Fire Department contacted him about doing a controlled burn at Post Mills Natural Area. The Commission is interested in having a burn done to remove thatch and create a better environment for ground nesting birds. Jeff will let Chad know that the Commission would like to move forward with the burning.
9. Commission members who attended the visit to the Town Forest lumber harvest site reported on what they saw and what was happening. Jim had photos and videos of the visit that he shared with the group. Jim also reported that he was contacted by a neighbor who was concerned about the early morning start time for the work and had other concerns about the harvest.
10. Li got more information about effort to extend the otter trapping season. The reason for extending the season is so that it overlaps with the beaver trapping season. If the two seasons overlap and an otter is accidentally trapped in a beaver trap, the hunter will not be penalized for trapping an otter. Otter season is October 22, 2016 through February 28, 2017 and beaver season is one month longer (March 28th). Li will write to Protect Our Wildlife for more information.
11. UVLT will send photos to the Select Board about the boundary violation at the Taylor Flood Plain Forest. It is not clear if rectifying the violation will be more damaging than helpful.

12. Jim and Libby talked about creating a calendar for the road crew that shows the expected emergence times of invasive plants. Sue Fritz will get started on the calendar.
13. Jim talked about starting pull invasive plants early this year.
14. Minutes from 1-11-17 were approved as amended.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51PM.

Reminder that Commission members should let Li know ahead of time if they cannot attend the next Conservation Commission meeting, so that she may plan accordingly.

Our next meeting is March 22, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Lavanway