

Thetford Conservation Commission Minutes
November 15, 2017

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

The Minutes of October 11 were approved with the following corrections. Charge for Sam Jaffe's caterpillar event was \$500 and donations covered the remaining travel charge of \$96.

Jim and Libby are in contact with Peggy Wiley to select winter program films through the Jackson Hole Wildlife Society. Membership is required for rentals. Jim, Libby and Peggy will discuss sharing the cost to join with West Fairlee Conservation Commission. The Caterpillar event had 125 participants and all agreed that the presentation was engaging and professional.

After review the Overview of Open Meeting Laws, the TCC voted to dissolve the Education Sub-Committee. Going forward, emails can only be used to distribute information and/or develop an agenda, but discussion of business is not permitted. Also, "other business" is not allowed as an agenda item.

Bob gave the end of year budget accounting. \$2500 has been transferred to the Conservation Trust Fund by the town treasurer, Jill Graff. \$5000 from the Conservation Trust Fund has been donated to the UVLT for the New Hope Farm conservation project. The estimated balance of that fund is \$24,763. The operating fund has a balance of \$43.95 after expenses of Tom Wessel event (\$150), Caterpillar event (\$250) and uprooter (\$167.36). Bob will ask Jill Graff if \$5000 has been transferred to the Town Lands Maintenance Fund in the Select Board budget. In addition, Bob will ask if donations to the TCC may be deposited to the TCC operating budget rather than into the town's general fund.

The TCC board voted to ask the Select Board to budget \$850 for the TCC operating budget for 2018. This is an increase of \$100 from 2017 due to the increasing costs of educational programs and costs associated with the town-wide garlic mustard removal efforts.

Ann will send a letter to the Select Board with this request and include the TCC's justification for the increase.

The TCC voted to request that the Select Board to provide \$2500 in the 2018 budget for the Conservation Fund as they have done in previous years.

A Town Plan meeting held on 11/8/17 was attended by the majority of TCC members. Time did not permit discussion of the Natural Resources chapter of the proposed Town Plan. The Select Board will post the date for next Town Plan review meeting. The TCC board agreed to put Chapter V on the agenda for the TCC December meeting. All members are encouraged to study the Natural Resources chapter for this discussion.

TCC will stay in touch with Bob Walker about the Thetford Energy Committee's Enhanced Energy Planning especially concerning future plans for large solar installations.

UVLT has received the check \$5,000 from the Town for the support of The New Hope Farm conservation project.

Ehrhard Frost's proposal for forestry services in 2018 was discussed. Frost's boundary project cost on the Taylor Tract need a more definite estimate. Connie Snyder offered to approach local surveyors for estimates on surveying the Taylor Flood Plain Forest. The TCC board voted to approve Frost's forestry work order for the Hughes Forest and the Town Forest. In addition to the proposed work, TCC will ask Ehrhard to add invasive plant surveillance of the harvested areas on Hughes and cost projections for invasive plant treatment on town land for the next two years.

Jeff will ask Ellis Paige if the drainage work is completed for mowing on the PMNA. The next burn area will be near the well area. Jeff walked the Hughes Tract and recommended more mapping of invasives in the near future.

Sue Fritz responded to Tom Norton's email regarding invasive plant control. Probable reasons for major growth this year are warm fall weather and small number of volunteers to pull garlic mustard. Instead of pulling once a season, it would be ideal to pull several times to discourage growth. Encouraging more volunteer participation by asking towns people to adopt a road or a trail for this effort was suggested.

There are two plant extractors that can be signed from Town Hall for uprooting invasive plants.

A discussion of future land preservation projects will be on the next meeting agenda.

The next meeting is December 13, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Tallman