

DRAFT
Thetford Conservation Commission Minutes

March 28, 2018

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

Absent: Sue Fritz

Guests: Li Shen, Connie Snyder

The minutes of February 28 were approved as amended.

Discussion of the March 12, 2018 Select Board meeting included a review of the Vermont's Open Meeting Laws and the policies for Town commission/committee members as defined in the Thetford Committee Handbook.

Six Commission members appointments end in 2018. To be re-appointed, current members must submit a letter of interest to the Select Board. This should be done by the next SB meeting which is Monday, April 2, 2018.

Commission officer appointments were approved:

Chairperson: Ann Lavanway

Vice Chairperson: Jim McCracken

Treasurer: Bob Pulaski

Secretary: Sue Tallman

Ehrhard Frost's 2018 work proposal was reviewed, approved and signed. The signed proposal will now go to the Select Board for approval.

Ehrhard Frost's summary of the timber harvest at the Town Forest was reviewed.

The Commission discussed inventorying Thetford's natural resources. This work would need to be done by a professional and cost estimates would be needed for the inventory. Jim and Jeff offered to contact sources for this information. The inventory priorities need to be established and need to be specific. Jeff recommended focusing on the location of large wildlife habitat blocks, all flowing and still water sources and unique areas of flora and fauna. While GIS data may provide information for an inventory, Jeff said that some ground-truthing would be needed for accuracy. Involving citizen science volunteers for ground-truthing could be considered. Li shared a copy of the natural resources inventory report from Lebanon, NH. Several TCC members volunteered to investigate possible funding sources for financial support of the work. Jeff will invite an inventory expert to attend a TCC meeting in April.

Funding for surveying and marking boundaries at the Taylor Floodplain Forest was included in this year's budget for town lands maintenance. Select Board Chair Stuart Rogers has the estimate

and contract for the work from Mr. Tom Otterman. The survey and marking is planned for this fall.

Jim and Libby gave an update on education outreach events. They have worked with the West Fairlee Conservation Commission to organize "a walk a month." The May walk will be the birding walk at the Taylor Floodplain Forest. The June walk will be held at Thetford Academy and will be led by Scott Ellis. The walk will include a tour of the TA yurt, trails, recent tree work and student projects. Other walks will be arranged and may include a bird and butterfly walk on Post Mills Nature Area. A night walk was also discussed.

Libby and Jim said that Green Up Day planning is underway and they will be meeting with Sally Bugg this Friday.

Jim posted a notice about Big Night on the Thetford list serve and he and Libby will be posting invasive plant alerts.

Connie reported on preparations for the May 12th birding walk on Taylor Floodplain Forest. Connie suggested that wooden planks may have to be placed over wet areas of the trail for the walk. Ann will design a poster and refreshments will be provided by TCC members. Connie may also organize a fall migration birding walk, if there is interest.

Sue T and Bob will continue to work on promotional trail information flyers.

Jeff and Steve will develop priorities and timeline estimates.

The Hughes Forest Monitoring by Bill Chabot for the Upper Valley Land Trust is planned for April 7, 2018. Ann will notify the TCC of the start time.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 11th at 7:00PM in Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Tallman