

Meeting Minutes: Dummerston Conservation Commission

February 11, 2016, 7:00 pm

Dummerston Town Hall

Members: John Anderson, Ed Anthes, Mary Ellen Copeland, Bill Johnson, Lynn Levine, Jane Michaud, Bill Schmidt, Betsy Whittaker

1. *January minutes.* A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as submitted.
2. *Financial report.* The DCC account has a balance of \$5,352.14.
3. *Inhabit.* The DCC agreed to co-sponsor, with Transition Dummerston (TD), the 2/17 showing of *Inhabit*, the documentary film on permaculture. TD will promote continued discussion of the film and form a working group around the topic at their 2/26 program.
4. *Town Meeting.* Betsy will coordinate display materials on invasives, focusing on the Asian Longhorn Beetle. Mary Ellen and Jonathan will speak.
5. *Pollinator Symposium.* The VT Agency of Natural Resources will sponsor Beetles, Bees & Butterflies on March 17th in Burlington; Mary Ellen plans to attend.
6. *Development Review Board.* Ed presented items brought up before the board for our consideration.
7. *West River Trail.* John will write to Bob Popp re protection of rare/endangered plants on the trail as it is being upgraded, cc'ing the Brattleboro CC and Friends of the West River Trail (FWT). The issue will also be addressed at the March joint meeting of CCs. It was suggested that BCC and FWT members be invited to walk the trail with DCC to share concerns.
8. *Black Mountain.* John has spoken with Murray McHugh of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) re rare/endangered plants near the parking area opposite the West River Trailhead on Rice Farm Road, which TNC is planning to expand.
9. *Connectivity.* Betsy has been in contact with the Putney CC about their tracking program. Although the project has generated many questions, and all the data has not yet been compiled, the PCC considers the project has yielded valuable results.
10. *Trails.* Bill S. reported that the Town Trail Committee will meet next week to talk about several issues regarding the Town Trail, which is now reached only from the Prospect Hill access. There's concern about continued use of this trail since it goes through privately owned land and there is no legal easement or right-of-way for it. Possible logging in the area in the near future is another concern. Re Prospect Hill, Bill S. reported Mary Lou Schmidt's concern about the legality of signing on the trail since it's on a granted right-of-way and not town-owned property. She is also concerned that a zoning permit may be needed for the post/sign at the entrance to the access trail. On trails, further, Bill S. noted that a trail network on the Scott Farm is now being looked into by the Scott Farm board.

11. *Town Plan*. Bill J. presented the Planning Commission (PC)'s draft schedule for the upcoming revision. Sarah Berg will be liaison between the PC and the DCC as we provide input; we will continue noting suggestions at the March CC meeting, when Sarah can be present. It was suggested that we review sections of the Plan outside Natural Resources, in the meantime.
12. *Conserving Your Land*. The 1/20 program was well attended and generated considerable interest among participants. Bill S. spoke with Joan Weir about following up with some of the attendees. It was suggested that panelist Mary Lou Schmidt's narrative be submitted as an article to the Views and the Commons, adding information about the program and other presenters. A DVD of the event might be created for Joan to use in further presentations.
13. *Future program ideas*
Mary Ellen has spoken with Chris Polatin about an April program on invasive plants.
Ed is looking into a program on fish for the spring.
14. *Scheduled programs*
2/17: Inhabit: film and discussion, 7 pm, The Learning Collaborative, Bill J. coordinating
2/22, 2/29, 3/7, 3/14: Biological Communities with Bob Engel, 10 am-12n, The Learning Collaborative, Mary Ellen coordinating
3/26: Maple Day, Bill S. coordinating. Seven Dummerston sugarmakers will have open houses 12n-4 pm, followed by a sugar-on-snow supper sponsored by the Fire Department.
3/31: Joint conservation commissions meeting, Putney CC hosting, Putney Cares barn.
15. *Sightings*
deer, bald eagle, fox, raccoons, skunks, cedar waxwings, robins, flickers, bluebirds, finches

Next meeting: March 10

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Michaud