

Minutes of Corinth Conservation Commission Meeting on Monday 2 October 2023

The meeting was called to order by Glynn Pellagrino at 7:03 PM. In attendance were Glynn Pellagrino, Luke Campbell, Ken Arkind, Mary Kent, John Mellquist, Lindle Sutton and Anne McKinsey.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved unanimously, with John Mellquist abstaining.

Lindle Sutton gave a brief treasurer's report. At present there is \$9,140.68 in the conservation committee's general fund and \$2,802.98 in the forest fund.

Discussion followed on the subject of the trapping presentation to be held Tuesday 17 October starting at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall. Two employees of the Vermont Fish and Game Department will be offering their remarks: Mike Scott, involved in enforcement of regulations, will cover the state rules that govern animal trapping. Bree Furfey, a wildlife biologist, will bring another perspective to the discussion. Glynn noted that Walt Cottrell has indicated he will be coming to the event as well. Dr. Cottrell is a retired veterinarian who also worked as a wildlife biologist, and will be available to offer a viewpoint on trapping that may differ from the state's regulatory agency. The Corinth Conservation Commission as a group will not take a position on wildlife trapping, but is hosting the discussion for educational purposes. Individuals on the commission may certainly want to express their personal opinions on this matter if so moved. Glynn will introduce the speakers and said he would try to keep the discussions civil, as some of the debate could become rather heated.

The group talked about whether to offer refreshments and what kind. After weighing the question, including the expectation that a large turnout could ensue, it was voted to skip the refreshments.

We decided to arrive around 6:30 in order to help get the room ready in time.

Discussion then moved on to forest blocks in the town of Corinth, and the state's interest in preserving forest land. A forest block is loosely defined as a contiguous piece of land on which is found a forest ecology, apart from agricultural, residential, or industrial uses. Also identified are habitat connectivity zones. The state has prepared maps of the towns, delineating the forest blocks and connectivity zones, which can be seen on their Bio-Finder Parcel Map online. From this map, one can find the names and addresses of the registered landowners of each parcel in a forest block. Most of the forest land is privately and individually held, with corporate forest owners being the next smaller group of landowners. The commission is interested in preparing a letter to be sent to the landowners of record within the identified forest blocks, to introduce people to the state and local goals of preserving forestland and to offer the support of both the Conservation Commission and the Corinth Planning Commission, through their access to expertise and resources, in helping forestland owners with their future land use decisions. A

draft of such a letter was introduced to the commission members. We were encouraged to study this draft and send our comments and corrections directly back to Ken Arkind.

Ken Arkind is working on a spreadsheet to contain a list of names and addresses of forest block landowners. This is a rather labor-intensive activity as it requires poring over the state Bio-Finder maps and copying down the details into the spreadsheet. We agreed to share this work, so that we can come up with a reasonably complete mailing list, and to get it done by 12/31/23. To choose which areas to work on, we started with a map of Corinth divided up into 7 sections, along certain roads. People chose particular sections to work with, and it was suggested that we make every effort to get our lists together in the next couple of months. For the present we are just focusing on the high-priority areas.

A special meeting was announced for 3 October on Heath Road connector, to consider whether it is to be discontinued as a public trail. This is a decision of the selectboard, and there are opinions on both sides of the question from interested parties.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.

--John Mellquist