



## **Conservation Commission**

Town of Hinesburg

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### **Hinesburg Conservation Commission Minutes**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 – 7:00 PM**

**Via Zoom:**

1. Call to order -- Meg, Kate, Tobi, Liz, Bob, John Kiedaisch 7:00 PM
2. Additions to agenda – Update to Town Plan from Planning Commission
3. Public Comment for non-agenda items – John gave background and information about updating the Town Plan. The Planning Commission is just starting this project. Kate said that the CC natural resource inventory should be helpful to inform the development of the new Town Plan. River corridors and wildlife corridors are the two priority items that would be most helpful; greater protection for these would help support the DRB. Greater protection for the environment in general is ultimately going to benefit Hinesburg landowners. Discussion of connection between Town Plan and Town Regulations. Another topic to raise within the Planning Commission: there should be new town regulations that bring all new developments under review according to the important environmental criteria listed in Act 250. The statewide effort toward more housing means that fighting increased density is not likely to be successful. But development needs to consider the need for environmental protection. Perhaps every development could be required to do a survey documenting the existing ecological features and natural resources of the parcel, along with a plan to both minimize impacts on healthy features and also to mitigate unhealthy features as a first step for development review. The Natural Resource Inventory is a good resource for this. Perhaps the town planners could require an assessment as a first step.
4. Land preservation fund – Bill, Kate and Meg met with the Hinesburg Land Trust. The group came up with were four tasks: identifying possible alternative sources for funding, coming up with criteria for prioritizing parcels (Liz might be able to help with mapping), conducting public outreach, and looking at possible partners for public land (other than VLT). Discussion of some of these ideas. We can begin to work on this in the coming year. By next meeting, Kate will talk to people in Monkton and Tobi will talk to people in Jericho. Liz will come back with ideas for tools that might help to prioritize parcels.
5. NRI update – Kate reported that she will meet with Jesse, Bob, and Alex to try to answer some of Jesse's questions. Landowners may not be happy if survey information becomes public, although they did give permission in advance, knowing the possibility of FOIA

requests. It is important to maintain trust with landowners. Perhaps a password system might work.

6. Updates:

- a. Geprags management – bird habitat management, VELCO management – we have a contract with Fish and Wildlife Partners Project and with the person who does the physical work, so it should be happening soon. Marc said that he could do a bird banding presentation June 1<sup>st</sup>. Summer will take the lead on that.
- b. Education subcommittee – Beaverland, by Leila Philip: book discussion April 4<sup>th</sup> 7pm at the library. Kate made a motion to spend up to \$75 on purchasing books to donate to the library. Meg seconded. Passed unanimously.
- c. Watershed grant (beaver mitigation) – Bob reported that efforts are ongoing.

7. Adjourn

9:15 PM