

# Hinesburg Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes – Approved 10/11/22

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 – 7:00 PM

Via Zoom

Present: Darcie Mumley, Kate Kelly, Robert Hyams, Kathy Beyer, and Liz Doran

1. Call to order 7:08 PM

2. Additions/Deletions to agenda - none

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items – no public

4. Potential Hinesburg Conservation & Housing Fund

a. Two members voiced potential concerns of complication of management if funds were joined. General consensus of this view and that we do not have the bandwidth to dedicate to this issue.

b. Liz suggested we table discussion of joint fund until the Selectboard can discuss.

c. Bob agreed, commenting that not joining funds does not preclude collaboration.

5. Geprags: vegetation management work, bluebird box cleanout

a. Kate received an email from Mark LaBarr at Audubon wondering if the CC had thought about pursuing any more management work. Kate: We do have funding for such work through the VT Gas money, so can discuss if this is something we are interested in (e.g. invasives management, removing ash in the field to promote native shrubs)

There was general interest in collaborating vegetation management for improving bird habitat in Geprags.

b. Work has been done in the past by Audubon in 2019? to clear older stands of shrubs and invasives to encourage regeneration of young stands of dogwood that are beneficial for bird habitat. The goal is uneven age stands of dogwood.

c. previous funding had come from Habitat Stamp funds thru VT Fish and Wildlife.

d. General consensus that this work would be good. Details and timeline to be worked out.

e. Liz mentioned additions priorities for management in Geprags could/should include:

1. Upkeep/replacement of map/kiosk
2. Dead ash tree removal by bench
3. View clearing by bench

4. Possible trail erosion repair

f. Tobi added:

5. Invasives management - specifically poison parsnip removal and buckthorn

g. Kate reminded group that we have a thorough management plan for Geprags that is publicly available on the town website and we reviewed the plan. Noted we should still have some money available in the budget for Geprags management. Bob agreed to review available money as treasurer and update group.

h. Group decided to meet in person at Geprags for the next meeting sooner than usual schedule on Tuesday September 27th at 5:30pm to do a site visit and re-prioritize management of Geprags. Wednesday the 28th to serve as rain date.

6. LCBP Grants:

a. Bob proposed beaver overlay districts - zones where beavers are encouraged, noted Monkton and Charlotte are doing good work regarding beavers. This could fit under the clean water fund proposal. Could be good for encouraging town/citizen education regarding the ecosystem importance of beavers. Could be challenging to quantify need and zone designation.

b. Kate is interested in possible use toward ecological improvement of Patrick Brook and Canal - noted perhaps this is a larger project than Conservation Commission can take on.

7. Natural Resources Inventory: volunteers - Kate and Bob both offered to make some phone calls to landowners.

Tobi to send out round 3 letter in addition.

8. Town Budget Request

a. Bob proposed asking for increased funding for Land Preservation Fund - ask for \$15K, Tobi Seconded this proposal.

b. Liz proposed more education funding to be spent on landowner education regarding water quality improvements, buffers.

c. General discussion of Geprags funding, mowing increase for Parsnip management? Should we focus on a specific area vs. the whole field? Do we need a quote from Wahl? Maps replacement? Increased education funding for signage in Geprags regarding plant ID of both native and invasive plants - perhaps a story walk with signs along the way? What is poison parsnip? What is buckthorn? Graffiti cleanup? Do we need additional funding for invasives work above and beyond what volunteers can accomplish?

9.) Haystack Crossing General Development Review:

Bob offered a map of important wetland areas surrounding Haystack crossing development and great potential for collaborative conservation of these lands. There is clear conservation value in protecting and improving these wetland

areas. The mechanisms for doing this work/obtaining access/permission/funding for conserving/improving/protecting this land is still unclear- Bob to seek counsel from town manager regarding best mechanisms to propose to DRB toward general aim of conserving/improving/protecting this important habitat.

10. Education: beaver/parsnip/osprey

a..A video about using parsnip predator WAS in fact made by Bob, Kate, and Darcie. This video needs to be uploaded and shared. Possible signage needed in Geprags.

b. Beaver – should have a goal (beaver overlay district?) – build support through education now (Videos? Flyers? Beaver presentation?).

c. Osprey – we are supportive of the idea but don't have the budget to pay GMP. Interested resident does not have the capacity to follow up.

11. Review minutes of August 9th, 2022 8:55 PM

Darcie made a motion to approve the minutes of August 9, 2022. Tobi seconded, and all approved.

8. Nature Notes:smelly buds, giant puffball mushrooms, and aspirations of four toed salamander sightings.

9. Adjourn 9:13 PM