

## MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

Brookfield Conservation Commission Meeting

February 19, 2024, Presidents' Day

7:00 pm Regular meeting at Brookfield Town Office/Library or via Zoom:

<https://tnc.zoom.us/j/92495084272?from=addon>

Present: Jon B, Jon Jickling, Starr Strong, Susan Shea, Sarah Shaw

Absent: Marty Allen

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm by Jon Binhammer, Chair

1. Review Agenda
2. Public Comment - None
3. Approval of Minutes of the January meeting
  - Starr Strong moved to accept the minutes, Jon Jickling seconded.
4. Town Plan Subcommittee Chair
  - a. The Committee agreed that a Chair should be elected to direct the Town Plan Conservation Subcommittee. The role will be decided at a later meeting when all members are present.
5. I-89 Underpass Progress
  - a. Counsel for Department of Fish & Wildlife has created a legal document for the Taplins to sign that would allow VTrans to remove fencing from their land bordering the underpass. This document will be presented to the Taplins at a future date.
  - b. Currently the game camera is not posted to view wildlife activity. The Committee discussed other locations that would be valuable to observe wildlife crossing areas, however it was determined there may be more activity as Spring approaches. Susan suggested the Town Forest and I-89 crossing near Crossover Road could be valuable.
6. Town Meeting
  - a. The Commission discussed potential resources to share with community members at Town Meeting Day. Susan suggested the Commission share about Priority Forest Blocks, the Commission has maps that could be displayed that would share more information. Jon B suggested sharing information about recent legislation relating to forest blocks, and H.126 (Act 59) relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection.
7. Planning Commission Town Plan
  - a. Susan has reviewed the Plan and identified the following areas as places the Commission could provide input on: Natural Resources, Land Use, Scenic Protection and Conservation Areas. Susan also identified the section relating to Flood Resilience as another area that the Commission may be able to review and provide input to the Planning Commission on.

## 8. Winter Education Programs

- a. Galapagos talk by Starr Strong, Sunday, March 24 at 4:30PM-5:30PM  
Program to be held at Pond Village Church, there is a cost of \$100 to rent the room, which is to be split with the Brookfield Public Library. Jon Jickling made a motion to approve use of the Commission's funds, to the amount of \$50, for this program. Motion was seconded by Susan Shea and passed unanimously.
- b. Snowshoe walk – was cancelled due to weather and road conditions.
- c. The Commission will begin planning Spring education programs at future meetings

## 9. Ongoing Project Updates

- a. Stream talk for Old Town Hall by White River Partnership, June 20, 2024 at 7pm. Susan Shea suggested that the Commission pay for half of a \$100 honorarium. Starr will review the Commission's current budget and a vote on this matter will be completed by the Commission at a future meeting.

## 10. New Business

- a. Trail Grant Opportunity, Recreational Trail Program (RTP)– Jon J
  - i. Jon Jickling shared information on the history and purpose of the grant program, which is funded by Federal Highway Administration Funds. Eligible organizations include municipalities, nonprofits, and federal agencies. Jon has reviewed past projects funded in Vermont, as well as the documentation and timelines associated with the grant program. The consensus was to continue to explore additional grant programs.
  - ii. Susan suggested that the Commission consider the Town's Recreation & Conservation Fund for trail associated projects the Commission identifies as a priority project. Jon J suggested another project may include trail work after thinning Pine Plantation, which may need to occur in the future due to species health.
- b. Tree Planting Near Lamson Pond Fen Site
  - i. The Nature Conservancy owns 27 acres around Lamson Pond Road, a portion of which is semi-open land and there is a swale with Reed Canary Grass, an invasive grass species. Jon Binhammer suggested that a planting of conifers surrounding the affected area would shade out the invasives. This may be a Spring or early Summer project for the Commission to pursue with some public engagement.
- c. Improved Access to Sunset Lake at Hippo Park – 2025 VOREC Grant

- i. Jon B identified the grant as a potential project for dock with ramp for better access to Sunset Lake that would 1.) Enhance safe access for those of all abilities and 2.) Improve the shoreline stability with reduced foot traffic. Susan suggested this may be a project that could be aligned with the Community Partnership.
  - ii. The Commission agreed to set a date for a Spring site inspection to determine further feasibility/priority of this project.
- d. Treasurer's Report will be completed at next meeting to review finances and decide future expenses.
- Adjourn – Next meeting is March 18th, 2024
- a. Starr Strong motioned the meeting, motion was seconded by Sarah Shaw.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah A. Shaw