



Town of Rockingham
Town Hall, 7 Square
PO Box 370
Bellows Falls, VT 05101
Voice: (802) 463-3964 Fax: (802) 463-1228
Website: rockbf.org

Rockingham Conservation Commission

MONDAY, May 9th, 2016
7:00 pm; Town Hall, 3rd Floor

MINUTES:

Vice Chair Amy Howlett called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Present: Amy Howlett, Tom Herson, Guy Payne, Peter Bergstrom, Paul Wilson, Devin Smith. Absent: Mike Ghia, Fred Bennett.

1. Approve Minutes of April Meeting

Moved by Guy, seconded Paul, approved.

2. Recruitment and Logistics

Peter mentioned that he has talked to someone who might fill the vacant slot on the Commission; that person could not come tonight to see what our group is up to, but may come to our June meeting. Most of us got the email that Mike sent out using Mail Chimp on May 1

3. Coordination with Planning Commission

Possible Joint Meeting – no news

Expanding Natural Resources Zoning District -- Tom reviewed some of the history of this effort concerning the southern parts of Herricks Cove, which are not now in this district, but we did not have an update on recent actions.

Rewriting the Natural Resources Chapter of Town Plan – Still waiting to hear from Chuck Wise about next steps on this.

4. Follow-up: Trail Connection possibilities between Pinnacle Lands and Rockingham

No progress to report. We need to contact landowners along the VAST trail along the Saxtons River to get permission to organize a hike along it to see if it would work as a hiking trail.

5. Herricks Cove and CT River

Review of participation in Wildlife Festival, Sunday, **May 1**

Devin was there all day with a display about walking onions, a perennial onion, and he gave some away. Some kids drew pictures of them; we agreed that kid activities attract people. One person signed up for the tree planting and about 5 for the permaculture mailing list. Amy and Guy both came for part of the day. We agreed that we should try to have 2 people there for most of the day.

6. Natural Resources

Follow-up from Saxtons River Tree planting **May 6th**

About 45 people came and all 430 trees were planted and mulched. The last folks left at 3:45 PM. Publicity well before the event was key to the turnout—Devin drafted a press release with a photo that Peter took, and Peter's daughter Madeline edited and sent it to all of the local media outlets a few weeks before the event. This led to a story of the front page of the Shopper above the fold, the week before the event, and a story also with photo in the Commons the week of the event in the Town & Village section. The Reformer sent a photographer and did a photo spread in the Weekend paper, and Alan Fowler shot footage for FACT-TV, which will be posted on their web site when it is edited. We planted a wide diversity of trees and shrubs, including 3 species of maples, sycamore, cottonwood, elderberry, nannyberry, choke cherry, and several species of willows. We agreed to follow up on the survival of the trees; we may water them if needed, and might add more mulch in the fall and/or the spring. We discussed the possibility of making a riparian tree planting an annual spring event led by the RCC; Peter mentioned that some of our larger brooks also have streambank erosion and could use more trees.

Follow-up from Green Up Day in Rockingham **May 7th**

Guy and Amy reported on the cleanup effort. Guy reported that he saw about 75 bags along roadsides in a survey he did over the weekend. Guy would like to see more teams working on problem areas, especially along 121 near the Westminster town line. Some towns (such as Waterbury) have online registration, and Grafton has an email list of volunteers; we don't have an email list or web site, but may develop an email list.

Update on Stream and Water Body Naming Project –Peter reported that Marie Caduto told him the head of the Agency of Natural Resources, Deb Markowitz, has the letter approving the 32 names we submitted, and should sign it soon and send it to the State Library Board. That group has scheduled the public meeting on the names for **Tuesday July 12, 10 AM at the Rockingham Library, 3rd floor meeting room**. The main issue to resolve at that meeting is the name for the waterfall on the Williams River: either **Brockways Mills Falls**, the historical name that does not seem to be used by locals but was supported by ANR, or **Sokoki Falls**, the name suggested by a local Abenaki leader. Steve Crofter, who lives next to those falls, will submit a petition to name it Sokoki Falls.

7. Energy Committee

PACE in Rockingham- Implementation and Follow-up

Guy reported that this had been approved at the Annual Meeting, and he will prepare and distribute a press release.

Energy Committee Educational Programming Planning

Guy reported that rather than focusing on general energy efficiency, he will plan events with more varied themes that may attract more people, such as dealing with wet basements.

Municipal Solar Research Initiative Continued
On Hold.

8. Announcements of Events of relevance to the RCC Mission

Devin described the activities of the Saxtons River Permaculture Project, a project of the Saxtons River Community Building, a new nonprofit that is forming there. Some of the volunteers at the tree planting were recruited through that group, and the group is discussing other on-the-ground projects.

Paul asked if we had tried any invasives control at the tree planting site; Devin said we had considered it but mainly we just avoided the densest stands of knotweed when planting trees. Tom said the Black River Action Team had done some knotweed control in Springfield, and said he would forward details about this to the group. This could be a topic of a future RCC educational program, possibly including other invasive species such as burning bush, glossy buckthorn, and barberry.

9. Confirm **NEXT MEETING Monday, June 13th**

Adjourn: moved by Guy, seconded by Tom, at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Peter Bergstrom, Secretary, on 5/15/16.