



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Type:.....Regular Meeting
Date:.....April 28, 2023
Time:.....6:30 p.m.
Place:.....Community Room
Address:.....43 Bombardier Road, Milton
Contact:.....(802) 893-1186
Website:.....www.miltonvt.gov

MEETING MINUTES

Dan Gaherty, Chair William Pikul, Vice-chair Laurie DiCesare, Clerk Bonnie Pease, Member Pamela Sandoval, Member Kris Dulmer, Milton Tree Warden & MCC liaison, Jenna Tucker Eugair, Director of Recreation

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Dan Gaherty at 6:34 p.m.

2. Attendance:

Members Present: Laurie DiCesare, Dan Gaherty (via Zoom), Bonnie Pease, William Pikul and Pamela Sandoval

Members absent: None

Staff Present: Jenna Eugair (Milton Recreation Director)

Public Present: Diane Barrows (via Zoom); Holly Godfrey (via Zoom)

3. Agenda Review:

4. Business:

A. Milton Town Forest ADA Trail Project: Meeting with Tina Heath, Julie Follensbee, DEC Wetlands Ecologists (April 21, 2023): Dan said the RFP project information is ready to be sent out. Bonnie gave a recap of the project history including the Nov. 30, 2022 site walk she led with State Wetlands Ecologist Julie Follensbee and Jeff Kershner of Hamlin Engineering (as an Army Corps of Engineers map must accompany our wetlands permit.) Milton Planning Director Cymone Bedford discussed the two muddy areas that may or may not be Class II Wetlands. Bonnie said the viewing platform site will be moved uphill out of the 50ft buffer zone.

MTF Site Walk May 12, 2023 at 2 p.m.: Wetlands Ecologist Tina Heath will walk the site, look at the plants and check out the two muddy areas. Bonnie said the VYCC bridge needs to be upgraded to ADA standards and may need railings.

B. Green-Up Day (May 6, 2023) Preparation: Jenna said Green-up bags (600 were received this year) and sign-up sheets are in the Town Office lobby. Flyers are being sent out to park kiosks and business sites around Town. Laurie will bring Kris's Bald Cypress treeling; rooted Nannyberries from her yard; and the Arbor Day treelings (if they arrive on time) to Bombardier Park West to offer to participants. William will pick up the coffee / hot chocolate and donuts. Laurie, Bonnie and Pamela will staff the Pavilion from 8 a.m. to Noon. Jen said she ordered gloves. Pamela will work on a survey form to give to Green-Up participants.

C. Franklin Co. NRC: Arrowhead Lake Workgroup Meeting (April 4, 2023): Dan and Pamela attended the workshop. The group asked for volunteers to sample water requiring an hour-long paddle once a month. Meeting was mostly a repeat of last year's workshop. The leadership wants to do tree plantings along the Husky property and have volunteers with information staff the boat launches on weekends during the summer months.

D. Friends of Northern Lake Champlain (www.friendsofnorthernlakechamplain.org) (April 4, 2023): Dan attended the meeting. Kent Henderson and others want to work with the Town of Georgia. Dan will ask Kent if he would like to offer a presentation to the MCC.

E. Eagle Mountain Site Visit (April 10, 2023): Dan did a site visit with Matt Fiddler of Lake Champlain Land Trust (LCLT) on April 10, 2023. The LCLT monitors all their properties. There were two areas Matt was concerned about.

1. On the SW corner, on the opposite side of Cold Spring Road from the trailhead, a sap-line was recently installed along the property boundary. We will need to monitor this.

2. Henry Road: Matt said that one property marker was missing and a brush pile may be on Town property. Jen said the brush pile has been moved and the marker has been replaced. Bonnie asked if Chris Boget (LCLT) wanted the boundary resurveyed. Dan said the issue has been resolved. William offered to re-place the chain at the trailhead this weekend.

F. Solar Farm off Landfill Road: Bonnie showed us a map of the Solar Farm. Once the site work has been completed, we are considering adding a trail connection to the adjacent Lamoille Riverwalk.

G. "No-Mow May": On a request from Chittenden North State Senator Irene Wrenner, Laurie researched the "No-Mow May" initiative that urges homeowners and farmers not to mow their lawns or fields during the month of May to allow wildflowers to supply pollen and nectar to early-season pollinators. Laurie wrote a photo-essay that she will send to the Islander and ask that they publish it.

H. Arbor Day Conference at VT Tech. in Randolph, VT (May 19, 2023): Bonnie and Pam plan to attend this educational conference with workshops on many topics. The \$50 fee per attendee is paid by the Town and includes lunch.

I. Trail Maintenance: Lamoille Riverwalk (LRW): William walked the trail with his family and only found a few fallen trees around post #5. He will repair the broken board on the YVCC bridge at post #6. Bonnie and Brian will work on releasing a couple of leaning trees. **Milton Town Forest (MTF):** Bonnie says the area is still wet, but William said he may carry in the 16-foot planks for the puncheon bridge next week with the help of his brother. William asked members to think of materials that we will need to purchase to prepare for upcoming projects, like having more directional signs for the LRW. Pam mentioned that temporary puncheons will be needed for the MTF. Holly Godfrey asked if volunteers are needed for these projects. She lives near the MTF and agrees the trails have been very muddy. We all said "yes" to volunteers. William gave her his contact number.

Staff Update: Bonnie says she has been reappointed to the MCC for another 4 years. Congratulations! Jenna says two more people have been hired for Buildings and Grounds. John Wells has already started part-time work at Bombardier Pk. Supervisor John Geary will start full-time work in late June.

Nature Notes: Laurie has seen a pair of Mallard ducks in her backyard pond. William has seen deer, wild turkeys and a woodchuck on his land. Bonnie says she took her bird feeders down so as not to entice the bears, but still throws some seed on the ground. She's been seeing white-throated sparrows. Pam says her neighbor has nesting phoebes. Holly asked if we have seen any purple martins. Pam, checking the Audubon website, says they have been seen in VT already. Dan has been seeing brown pelicans, dolphins and Minke whales in North Carolina.

5. Approval of Minutes: Bonnie MOVED that we approve the amended minutes of March 28, 2023. Laurie SECONDED. All APPROVED. Motion PASSED.

6. Adjournment: Bonnie MOVED that we adjourn. Laurie SECONDED. All APPROVED. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie DiCesare, MCC Clerk

APPROVED MINUTES:

_____ Date: _____
Dan Gaherty, Chair

Filed with the Milton Town Clerk's Office on this _____ day of _____, 2023.

ATTEST: _____, Milton Town Clerk

For The Islander:

“No-Mow May” Supports Early Spring Pollinators

Want an easy way to support pollinators for your garden and neighborhood? Just let your lawn or field go un-mowed through the month of May to allow the early Spring wildflowers to bloom and provide nectar and pollen for iridescent green sweat bees, black-and-yellow flower flies (many with patterns that mimic bees), and other early-season insects. Lesser Celandine, a yellow-flowered Buttercup Family plant, is a garden ground-cover plant that blooms in April, after the crocus and before the daffodils, and attracts many pollinators.

Adding White Clover along with grass seed to fill in any bare spots in your lawn this Spring will attract pollinators with their flower nectar...and help keep your lawn green through Summer dry spells. White Clover works with nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the soil to convert atmospheric nitrogen to a plant-usable form. They help hold the soil and fertilize the area around them by releasing nitrogen compounds when they die.

Allowing fields to remain un-mowed until June provides safe spaces for ground-nesting birds like Bobolinks to nest. Some compensation for delayed haying may be available through Audubon Vermont’s Bobolink Project.

Some of the best nectar plants for pollinators include Bee Balm (*Monarda* sp.), a Mint Family plant can tolerate moist soil, attracts hummingbirds and Clearwing Hummingbird Moths (*Hemaris* sp.) to their bright-red blooms in early August. *Monardas* are low-maintenance and deer resistant. Another “best nectar plant” is Salvia (*Salvia* sp.), also in the Mint family, which prefers well-drained soil but is deer and drought-resistant.

For additional resources see: “A Call to Inaction” by Brian D. Collier. UnlawningAmerica.societyrne.net.

“Weedscaping.” How much lawn do we really need?

“Five ways to Participate in No-Mow May and Help Bees this Spring” Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation (Xerces.org) The Xerces Society offers a free PDF of Northeastern native plants for pollinators and beneficial insects. A donation of \$5 or more brings you their newsletter.

Audubon Vermont’s Bobolink Project (<http://www.bobolinkproject.com> or vt.audubon.org).

- Laurie DiCesare, Milton Conservation Commission member.



Augochlorine Sweat Bee on Lesser Celandine
Photo: Laurie DiCesare



Orange-legged Furrow Bee on Lesser Celandine
Photo: Laurie DiCesare



Globetail Hover Fly (a bee mimic) on Lesser Celandine
Photo: Laurie DiCesare



Small Carpenter Bee on Lesser Celandine
Photo: Laurie DiCesare