

New Haven Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

10-16-24

Call to Order: 7:00 P.M. via Zoom. Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84417413284?pwd=99EFbzEB5fuuUZyWQSsazEZ0PLzLUL.1>

Meeting ID: 844 1741 3284

Passcode: 645974

In Attendance:

Dave Lewis
Ellie de Villiers
Polly Darnell
Marianne Eaton
Maggie Eaton
Kathy Cahill
Amy Danforth
Nick Tonzola

I. Welcomed Marianne Eaton, Secretary taking over for Rhiannon Johnson.

II. Dave made changes to September minutes. Added a thank you to Rhiannon for her service. Approved September meeting minutes.

III. Wildlife Crossing Project:

We all have a copy of the Planning Commission with updated crossing markers from Dave.

Kathy Cahill and Maggie Eaton attended as representatives of the Planning Commission.

Kathy explained how important maps are to a town plan. Incorporating wildlife crossings is important due to the detail in these maps that the CC has been working on.

Maggie explained that every 8 years the town needs to update the town plan. She didn't want to miss the opportunity to include the CC maps even though they are incomplete. Older maps had only 3 marked wildlife crossings so the new data hopefully can be incorporated into the new reference maps. She will report back at November's meeting how to do so.

Discussion about how the road crossings information is more than where they cross but rather where the species of interest live.

The Habitat map might be useful to see where the forest blocks are. Observations on the ground from homeowners might verify where more exact crossings are.

VT Conservation Design Overall Priorities map might inform the CC about what else is in the local environment. It's a new map and is found on the town's website. Planning

Commission/town plan draft/pages 30-40. Dave will download these maps and send to the CC group.

Maggie sent a link to CC members

1. **Updated 2025 Town Plan DRAFT on the Town's website at:

https://newhavenvt.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B95C9AC24-F92E-457E-9A2F-56C2E251493B%7D/uploads/Combined_2025_TOWN_PLAN_DRAFT_ENERGY_PLAN.pdf

NOTE: THE DRAFT IS STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

In 2022 the Legislature passed a law for the state to conserve 30% land by 2030 and 50% by 2050 to increase biodiversity. This goal is for the entire state so understanding what individual towns should be doing is important to understand. What is the Regional planning commission doing to support this law? Maggie will bring this up at next planning meeting. Might need to update the town plan in 2 years rather than waiting 8 years as our data will continue to grow.

If we need the New Haven citizens to vote on a new town plan on Town Meeting Day, the warning notice needs to be given in December. (Warn it 30 days ahead of public notice.) The zoning rules derive from the town plan so zoning changes might be necessary since some of the crossings have already been developed.

Might consider sites we haven't documented (north of Plank Road for example) based on walking roads and comparing data from the state maps already created.

Homeowners who see wildlife have a better understanding of crossings so the Forest Block map is useful to use. There are 6 target species and almost every place where a camera exists, they've been seen. There is another year in the data collection but the Planning commission needs this data now to create the updated Town Plan.

We think it's useful to blend the Forest Block map with the Crossings map. Document the high priority crossings to present and continue to refine the map as we go.

IV. Community Values Mapping:

Dave has reached out to Mary Dodge at the Cornwall CC regarding a similar project that they undertook. There is a brief description of their efforts on the town website as well :

<http://cornwallvt.com/cornwall-conservation-commission/community-values-mapping-project>

Discussion was tabled in favor of a longer discussion regarding the mapping project.

V. Other Business:

Suggestion that agendas become more specific. List what we need to do at next meeting and what assignments need to be done before the next meeting. This allows us to see incremental progress over months.

We need to be able to defend the crossings on the map to Select Board and the public as to why a particular area is important.

Did Susan deliver the laminated maps to the town highway drivers to mark wildlife observations?

Budget and Planning: November is a good time to plan for the upcoming year.

Items to prepare for the November meeting:

- Wildlife Crossing Project. Looking at our sites to determine how we are going to defend the high priorities.
- Dave will send 2 maps to members: Habitat Map and VT Conservation Design: Overall Priorities Map.

V. Adjourn at 7:50pm

Next regular NHCC meeting: Wednesday, November 20, 2024. 7:00pm