

# Meeting Minutes

**Town of New Haven  
Conservation Commission Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 7:00 P.M.**

**Members Present - Cheryl Mitchell, Susan Smiley, Mary Pratt, Polly Darnell, Ruth Penfield, Adam Rice, Rhiannon Johnson, Mark Krawczyk**

**Agenda:**

**Minutes from November 16, 2022 approved unanimously**

**Old Business:**

**- Date and guide for the field trip to Old Nash Farm**

The Old Nash Farm is a beautiful, historic property on River Road with new owners. Phoebe Vaughn would be happy to host a tour of the property, to be lead by Craig Zondag. The ideal window would be late January, early February.

We discussed a 1 - 1.5 hour field walk on a Saturday (perhaps either the 21st or the 28th of January) to make the event as accessible as possible.

**- Date and time for walking portions of the railroad bed**

Both Cheryl and Ruth have been in touch with Bev Landon who shared several interesting historic locations and uses along the trail.

**Community Read update?**

No new updates on this project. Polly is still pondering a choice of books for the next round. They're planning both a youth and adult session, but the youth title is not currently available at our library.

It was suggested that Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer could be a good option for the next session.

**Forest block overlay information from ACRPC. (shall we invite Amanda and Jeff to give us a presentation on the Waltham experience?)**

Susan Smiley shared that Bristol is discussing updating a wildlife crossing study previously done on the Lewis Creek in Bristol. They've discussed hiring a consultant to serve as a task leader (Sophie Mazowita from Jeffersonville) to help with these plan updates. Here's a link to her website - <https://www.trackingconnection.com/about>

The town would like to reach out to hunters and trappers familiar with the area to help inform the development of a pamphlet that could be shared with local landowners to educate them about wildlife travel patterns prior to new development.

Perhaps members of the New Haven Conservation Commission could sit in on the training so that we might be able to undertake this type of work here in New Haven.

It was suggested that perhaps the NHCC could submit a request for funding from the town to help cover costs to hire a specialist to train citizens in tracking and wildlife crossing analysis.

Susan Smiley reminded us of previous work done with Jens Hilke from Vermont Fish and Wildlife. After initially identifying 10 potential sites in New Haven to study specific wildlife road crossing patterns, he seemed to believe that there were only a few (2-5) of the initially identified sites that were good candidates for a more comprehensive analysis through the seasons.

Susan will follow up with him to double check on the results of his visit.

We discussed the bigger picture and why we've been exploring this theme over the past year or so. One big part of the reasoning was to develop resources to share with the Planning Commission to help inform their process and perhaps create an overlay district if relevant.

We discussed inviting Jeff and Amanda Bodell from Waltham to share more about their experiences there in creating an overlay district.

We then discussed the final project delivered by a UVM student in the Field Naturalist PLACE program several years ago and plan to revisit it to examine its relevance to these current initiatives.

### **Website**

Adam Rice has been working on archiving local photos that can be added to the website. He suggested that we simply host and manage the content on the town's website rather than resurrect the previous website - [www.vermontconservation.com](http://www.vermontconservation.com)

He will also check the web archive to see if there is any content that he'd be able to retrieve from the old website.

### **New business:**

**Request from Bernard Paquette re:** Request for a letter of support for a VT State Declaration: Vermont Invasive (management) Day

Bernie's letter was asking local conservation commissions to share what they've been doing about the issue of invasive species in the landscape. Since we haven't done much yet on the issue as a commission, we agreed that we currently have little to offer.

We also discussed the framing of 'solving' the issue of invasive plants in the area and what solutions feel practical, effective and in keeping with conservation efforts.

### **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday January 18th at 7pm.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.**