

Bristol Conservation Commission (BCC)

Minutes

Sept 8 2022

6:00 pm

Location: HUB pavilion

Members Present:

Carolyn Dash, Chair (CD), Kristen Underwood, Vice Chair (KU), Zelig Smith, Clerk (ZS) arrived 6:11, Helen Young (HY), Nancy Morrison (NM), Jono Chapin (JC) arrived 6:25

Members of Public:

Amos Martin of Bristol, Ellie de Villiers of the New Haven present 6:00- 6:55, Dave Lewis of the New Haven Conservation Commission present 7:00-7:30, Mary Dodge of the Cornwall Conservation Commission, Sophie Mazowita of Tracking Connection in Jeffersonville

I Call to order: 6:00 pm at HUB pavilion

The September 2022 meeting of the BCC was called to order at 6:01 PM on September 9th, 2022.

II Public Comment Period

No public comments were made

III Addition of Items to the Agenda

No new items added to the agenda

IV Review and approval of minutes from July 14, 2022

KU made a motion to table the approval of the minutes from July, 14, 2022, HY seconded the motion. The motion to table the approval of the minutes from July was approved. The minutes will be approved at the October meeting.

V Correspondence

No correspondences

VI Old Business

- A. Discuss how we might generate updated wildlife tracking maps for inclusion in the next Bristol Town Plan.
 - a. Previous work
 - i. The most recent wildlife study done in Bristol was completed in 2002 of the Lewis Creek Watershed.
 - b. Current status
 - i. The map created can be found in the town plan on page 98. Citizens from the town have raised concerns about this wildlife survey being out of date. This was brought to the attention of the BCC who are now discussing updating this information for town use.
 - ii. It is possible that a renewed study of wildlife survey for the town could fit into a number of available grant funding options. The BCC is discussing banding together with a couple adjacent towns to apply for a municipal planning grant and/or other grants that may be available. The municipal planning grant would last for a year, which could allow for a consultant to start the modeling and mapping process. Then

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members of the public could be trained to track to create a longer term survey of the area. Whatever was done by the public would need to be verified by a professional. Members will continue looking for funding options.

c. Next steps

- i. Sophie Mazowita is a professional tracker and naturalist. Mazowita joined our BCC meeting to discuss the way forward if the BCC got funding to do a wildlife survey.
- ii. The BCC looked at the map created by Mazowita's program in Burlington. This was largely a community driven effort where people provided information about wildlife sightings. Mazowita found that in Burlington the areas of significance were often very small strips of woods or hedgerows that were crucial for connecting animals to larger habitat areas. Often homeowners would not know how important these areas were to the wildlife in Burlington.
- iii. Dodge from the Cornwall CC brought in the map created a few years ago when they hired a consultant to do a wildlife survey. The only problem with this is that a fair amount of the areas would need to be verified before they could be used as an influential tool in development hearings
- iv. Mazowita brought up the question of whether or not it is more productive to get many untrained volunteers providing information or to hire a few professionals to survey the land.
- v. Mazowita argues that the place to start is with modeling. Jens Hilke from Vermont fish and wildlife has been contacted by the BCC and he mentioned a two prong approach starting with natural communities mapping and adding in public wildlife tracking work.
- vi. Dave Lewis from the New Haven CC told the BCC that they worked with Hilke to start the process and he told them that they would start by tracking otters, moose, bear, fisher, mink and bobcat. Mazowita argued that these are the six she would choose as well because they are forest dwellers, stream users, and generally umbrella species that help signify where smaller animals are as well.
- vii. In our next steps, Mazowita said she would write out a "menu" of different project options that could help us know what our next steps would be or what to put into a grant application. Mazowita said that the first steps would probably be naturalist wildlife reports and natural communities mapping and then moving into public participation and verification of the information brought in by volunteers.

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VIII Events

No upcoming events

IX Next Meeting:

The October 13, 2022 BCC meeting will be held in the Holley Hall conference room with a zoom option (the link will be provided in the public agenda). Masks will be required in person.

X Adjournment

KU made a motion to adjourn the meeting. NM seconded the motion. The motion passed and the September 8th BCC meeting was adjourned at 7:28.

A recording of the entire meeting is available at <http://bristolvt.org/fy-2022-2023-meetings/>