

Bristol Conservation Commission (BCC)

Minutes

September 14, 2023

6:00 pm

Location: Holley Hall conference room with Zoom option

Members Present: Carolyn Dash, Chair (CD), Jono Chapin, Vice Chair (JC), Zelig Smith, Clerk (ZS), Alex Smith (AS), Helen Young (HY), Kristen Underwood (KU), Nancy Morrison (NM), John Merriman (JM)

Members of Public: David Goldsmith, Porter Knight, Alexis Mychajliw, Jim Quaglino, Zac Farnham-Haskell, Rory Smith

I Call to order: 6:00 pm at Holley Hall

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM

II Public Comment Period

No public comments

III Addition of Items to the Agenda

1. Grant writer and the pond
2. Municipal vulnerability index

IV Review and approval of minutes from June 8 meeting

ZS made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 8 meeting. AS seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

V Correspondence

None

VI Old Business

A. Conservation Commission Membership

- a. The BCC currently has one spot available.

B. Updating wildlife maps

- a. Discussion about 2023-24 academic year with Dr. Alexis Mychajliw (Middlebury College mammologist) and her research student, David Goldsmith
 - i. The student last spring suggested doing a camera trap study at Sycamore Park. This would be a “public facing project”. Dr. Mychajliw’s student David will be picking up where Lauren left off in the spring. Dr. Mychajliw will be running a class this coming spring for a group of students who could potentially do some mapping based on the camera trap information. The information gathering could involve community involvement.
 - ii. Potential areas of focus for David could include creating an updated comprehensive survey of wildlife in Sycamore and Memorial parks. A member of the BCC will walk David and Dr. Mychajliw around the parks this fall to get ideas.

C. Parks Updates: Eagle, Memorial, Sycamore, Saunders River Access- updates?

- a. Eagle park universal fishing platform is scheduled for reconstruction in October with Masterson. The BCC will need to dig up some of the plants in the perennial garden. This will be scheduled via email.
- b. Updates on management plans for town parks
 - i. Drafts of the management plans for Eagle, Memorial and Sycamore Parks were all given to the selectboard for review. The selectboard will let the

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BCC know when they want to review them, though have suggested that the plans should include some of Porter Knight's accessibility ideas.

- c. Accessible town parks- a discussion with Porter Knight
 - i. Porter night applied for and qualified for Vermont's Technical Assistance Pilot Program. This gives Porter/Bristol access to experts and ambassadors for improving the accessibility of the parks (not money). A survey done to determine the mental health of Bristol residents showed that residents have poorer mental health than before the pandemic. This survey also showed that less than 50% of people have used Memorial, Sycamore, or Eagle parks recently. Porter wants to make these parks more accessible and available by increasing signage, parking, and ensuring that people know how to access the parks.
 - ii. The Technical Assistance Pilot experts started creating designs for eagle park, which would increase usage of the park and accessibility for people of all modes of transportation. This could include a couple of ADA trail loops around the park. Designs for signs and park landscaping for all of the parks could be created through this program. It is possible that ARPA funds could be allocated to a landscape architect to talk about barriers and challenges. One of the goals of the ARPA money was the improvement of park accessibility so this could fund some of this work. The next steps would be studies and grants after designs are created by this Technical Assistant Pilot Program. Flooding concerns will need to be part of that survey.
 - iii. Porter is hoping that these improvements would then happen within 5-7 years and then bristol could be a destination for ADA outdoor recreation.
 - iv. This topic will stay on the BCC agenda and Porter will continue to stay connected with the BCC as she progresses with this project.

VII New Business

A. Return from hiatus; discuss what business we should address this fall

- a. The BCC will invite Bristol's new grant writer to talk to us in the coming months.
- b. The BCC may invite with sheriff Elmore and/or someone from the ACSWD to come to a meeting and talk about illegal dumping in Bristol and try to find a solution.
- c. The BCC will revisit the town plan and ensure that we are fulfilling our missions.
- d. The question was raised about what to do with the pollinator garden in Sycamore park.
 - i. In the future the garden will need weeding. It is unclear who can do that, possibly Porter's summer interns.
 - ii. BCC members will post on Front Porch Forum to see if anyone is splitting perennials and could donate some to the garden.

B. Bristol Pond Millfoil

- a. There DEC Grants available for millfoil.

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- b. The BCC will reach out to the Lewis Creek Association about their experience with it and whether or not we should be doing millfoil mitigation.

C. Municipal Vulnerability Index

- a. The Global Warming Solutions Act mandates the development of a Municipal Vulnerability Index (MVI)
- b. The goal of this is to Indicate municipalities' vulnerability to climate change based on a range of social, economic, and biophysical factors
This will then create an index that helps towns prepare for challenges of climate change
- c. state is sending out feelers to different groups and getting input
- d. The BCC will continue to monitor this.

VIII Events

- A. Addison County Conservation Commission Summit Nov 4, 8:45am-12:30pm Holley Hall

IX Next Meeting:

The next BCC meeting will take place on October 12th at 6:00pm. The location will be Holley Hall conference room with Zoom option

X Adjournment

KU made a motion to adjourn the meeting. HY seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm.