

Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership Meeting
Wednesday, September 23, 2020; 1:30 PM
Remote GotoMeeting

Attendees: Ashley Parker, SB Project Manager; Melinda Scott, Williston Conservation Planner; Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg Director of Planning & Zoning; Dean Pierce, Shelburne Director of Planning & Zoning ; Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Gail Albert, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Abel Russ, St. George Development Review Board; Larry Lewack, Charlotte Town Planner; Sarah Dopp, President South Burlington Land Trust (Phone)

Absent: Sarah Gentry Tischler, St. George Selectboard; Don Rendall, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Holly Rees, Director of Recreation & Parks, South Burlington; Bob Hyams, Hinesburg Conservation Commission; Lisa Kingsbury, UVM Planning Services; Kevin Dorn, City Manager, City of South Burlington; Kate Kelly, Hinesburg Conservation Commission

Meeting began at approximately 1:35 PM.

Welcome and Round of introductions.

Changes or additions to Agenda –

Due to folks needing to leave at a certain time, Ashley proposed moving agenda item #4 (Partner News/Updates) after agenda item #6 (Mapping Project). The group agreed and the change was made.

Consideration of Minutes from Previous Meeting –

The minutes from the July 22, 2020, meeting were reviewed. A few minor edits were proposed and accepted. Those changes were made and the minutes were accepted as amended.

Discussion: Audubon NFWF Grant & Project Opportunities –

Ashley provided an overview of the grant received by Audubon and the sub-award that will be provided to the partnership as a result. The partnership will be receiving \$2,250 through this grant. There is opportunity for the partnership to align with projects that Audubon is already engaged in, while also furthering the goals and voice of the partnership. The grant was written to support forest, young/forest, and riparian habitat that supports unique bird species. Projects could range from: 1. Landowner outreach focused on encouraging habitat management; 2. Consideration of a hands-on stewardship project somewhere in the region. There is no rush on selecting a project, as there are two years to spend the money. Audubon recommended identifying how the partnership would like to spend the money and then look at leveraging the sub-award with other monies/donations.

Alex suggested that it would be great to pick one demonstration site in the region and partner with Audubon. We could use the rest of the money to conduct outreach with partnership residents. He threw out the idea that we could use a Hinesburg site as a demo site, but he would be more excited about actually doing a hands-on project. Others agreed with this.

Sarah asked about whether projects could be done on private land, or if it had to be public land? Ashley indicated that it likely did not matter, but we would need to understand who owned the land and

whether there would be any obstacles in implementing a project that is not owned by one of the partner municipalities.

Ashley relayed that Mark LaBarr from Audubon had given her a heads up that they are hoping to have a workshop in late October/early November at one of their projects in Charlotte. He suggested it might be a good opportunity to introduce the work they are doing and give folks an idea of what could be done in our region. Mark will be sending Ashley additional information as this event is scheduled, and she will forward that around.

Mapping Project –

The goal of the discussion today is to determine the status of all map data and where we're at with the conservation map. The group needs to understand what data is still missing, how do we get that data, and how do we move forward to update the map viewer.

Melinda noted she would resend any missing data to Melanie for Williston. Shelburne is still very busy and there is no timetable for Dean to get Melanie any data. Melanie offered to connect with Dean to work on completing the Shelburne portion of the map. Hinesburg is likely missing information on two parcels, and Alex will work on getting that to Melanie in the next couple of weeks. It seems like the South Burlington data is updated.

Ashley asked whether Melanie had received the Audubon data file to overlay on the regional conservation map. She said she did and will work on incorporating that into the map. This layer shows prime bird habitat in the region.

Melanie will try to get a map for the group to look at for the October meeting.

Abel asked about St. George's data, and Melanie indicated that there weren't any conserved lands identified in the Town Plan. Abel mentioned a Town Forest, and the group suggested that it might be worth adding that to the map. Abel said he would look into that and get back to Melanie with any information.

Larry asked about Charlotte and why Charlotte had been removed from the map. The partnership reviewed the history of the partnership's original agreement and Charlotte's decision at the time to not become a part of the partnership. As a result, the group decided to not include Charlotte as they were not an official member of the partnership. The partnership has always remained open to including Charlotte should they choose to join the partnership. Melanie also added that Charlotte's data could be added at any time, and that it would be fairly easy to add their data as it closely resembles the state data standards that the group has chosen to follow. Larry will talk with Dean about whether there is any new interest in Charlotte formally joining the partnership.

Partner News and/or Updates –

Alex relayed that things have been fairly quiet in Hinesburg. The natural resource inventory is complete, but they are still working on training so he is not sure when it will be released for public information sessions.

Ashley reported that South Burlington has successfully held some community hikes since July. The City is also continuing to move some projects along, though things are definitely slow going. There has also been some work done to look at a trail network on the AuClair property, and Ashley said she would pass any information to Dean if there are potential trail connections.

Sarah also reported that South Burlington is still under interim zoning until November, with another possible vote for an extension.

Melinda reported that the Williston DRB has approved a subdivision across from the AuClair property and it includes a trail easement with a possible connection to the trail network on the AuClair property. Melinda said she would pass along the easement information to Ashley to share with Paul. Ashley would also ask Paul about any potential connections with Shelburne.

Dean noted that the Shelburne NRC is plugging away. Conservation has been quiet, but Phase II of the Bread & Butter project (North of Shelburne Pond) is in progress. The Committee has also been working on Act 171 implementation work, which has involved folding it into natural resources mapping and enhancement of the bylaws. There has also been an increased use of Town parks and trails.

The next meeting is currently scheduled for: October 28th at 1:30 PM. It will be remote and Ashley will send along those details as it gets closer.

The meeting was adjourned.