

Champlain Valley Conservation Partnership Meeting
Wednesday, October 27, 2021; 1:30 PM
Remote GotoMeeting

Attendees: Ashley Parker, SB Project Manager; Melinda Scott, Williston Conservation Planner; Alex Weinhagen, Hinesburg Director of Planning & Zoning; Gail Albert, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Don Rendall, Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Abel Russ, St. George Development Review Board; Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; John Bossange, South Burlington Natural Resources & Conservation Committee; Tim Larned, Winooski Valley Park District

Absent: Bob Hyams, Hinesburg Conservation Commission; Kate Kelly, Hinesburg Conservation Commission; Sarah Gentry Tischler, St. George Selectboard; Jens Hilke, Conservation Planning Biologist, VT Fish & Wildlife Department; Sarah Dopp, President South Burlington Land Trust; Mark LaBarr, Audubon VT.

Meeting began at approximately 1:35 PM.

Welcome and Round of introductions.

Changes or additions to Agenda –

Consideration of Minutes from Previous Meeting –

The meeting minutes were reviewed from September 22. Minutes were accepted pending the revised sentence.

Partner News and/or Updates –

John Bossange spoke about the S Burlington's proposed LDRs. He was there speaking on behalf of the City's Natural Resources & Conservation Committee. Pushback from Affordable Housing Committee. Balance between the protection of natural resources and the need for housing.

Gail Albert stated Shelburne has hired a planner who will start early December. They are still looking to hire an Associate Planner. Gail Alpert spoke about a Selectboard meeting on proposed bylaw revisions. Gail stated the Natural Resources Committee requested to have the opportunity to review projects near water resources early in the process. Currently there is no requirement for developments to be reviewed by the Committee prior to DRB review. There is a growing number of people in town asking for more on environmental protection and/ climate change.

Melinda reiterated the points brought up by John Bossange and stated the best place for housing including affordable housing is in the growth centers where there is transit and water/sewer. Build up the density in those areas.

Project Discussion: Focus Area Mapping Update & Discussion –

Ashley screen shared the revised CVCP focus area map. Melanie Needle explained the process that was used to revise the map. Jens Hilke created the focus area using Vermont Conservation Design data. Alex

commented that there is a significant area in the northeast of Hinesburg and extends into Huntington and Richmond, why is this area included? Can that area be removed, as it extends into towns not part of the partnership? Ashley remembers this was discussed at the previous meeting and thinks this area may have been included because there is connectivity. Melinda agrees with Alex, it seems outside the scope of this group. Alex wonders if this area was included why not include forest blocks in Hinesburg to the south of the area shown? Should the focus area be restricted to just the Lake Iroquois Area and Shelburne Pond, and connections between them? Ashley asked if Alex would be willing to reach out to Jens, and Alex said he would. Alex asked Melanie about the conserved areas shown on the map, and Melanie stated it represents a combination of lands identified in the Vermont Conserved Lands database and the municipally identified protected lands. Alex stated we may want to name them differently from “conserved” if the map is showing all lands/levels of protections. Melanie noted that she would look at alternative labels for “conserved areas” and then bring those options back to the group at the next meeting. Melanie showed the “live” map for the purposes of looking at the map areas more closely. Melanie said once the focus area is updated, she will distribute a link to the interactive version.

Review & Discuss Focus Area Outreach Piece -

Ashley shared a draft outreach document with the group. Jens will fill in information about the focus area’s natural resource values. Melinda suggested compiling information and photos from each of the partners to create a Story Map from the outreach document. Melanie said she could collaborate on this. Russ suggested trying to get some drone footage. Alex said that the project areas are heavy on the land protection end and short on other areas (stewardship, outreach and education). We should add to the latter categories. The partners agreed to take a look at this list, and add additional projects to the table before the next meeting.

Project Updates –

Ashley briefly updated the partners on the status of the Goodrich parcel project since the last meeting. Ashley met with VHB to assess the natural resources on the parcel. Winooski Valley Park District is working with VT Audubon on the restoration project, including invasives removal and plantings. Tim Larned also spoke about another project on the Muddy Brook Wetland Reserve with Partners for Fish and Wildlife and the South Burlington Rotary, which could also be a good project to engage volunteers. Tim noted that he would share the volunteer project details with the group once they were established, and the partners could share with their communities.

Assess Next Steps on Future Projects –

Ashley would like to table this discussion at least until the group finalizes its outreach piece. That piece will be integral in sharing the story of the partnership and connecting with various groups that might be interested in connecting with the partnership on these issues. She felt that finishing the outreach piece is important prior to taking this next step. Melinda mentioned the work the City of Burlington is doing on Nature Based Climate Solutions, and much of their work ties into landowner engagement and equity/access. She will share a link with the group.

- **Regional Land Equity & Access**
- **Regional Landowner Engagement**
- **Others?**

Ashley said the next two meetings are right before holidays so suggested changing the meetings for November and December to one week earlier. She will send out meeting invites for November 17th and December 15th.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm.