WINDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018

Present: Alison Trowbridge, Hal Wilkins, Ginny Crittenden, Dawn Bower, Vance Bell, Dawn Bower, Barbara Davis. Diane Newton unable to attend. Joan Weir, from the Vermont Land Trust was here as a guest speaker.

Called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Alison, Chair

1.We invited Joan Weir to speak first. She works in the Brattleboro office of the Vt. Land Trust, and we invited her to tell us about what the trust does. She said that land protection is an individual decision made by land owners. Community conservation can happen if there is an area in the community that is used and enjoyed and needs to be protected, for example, as a scenic corridor. The question could be “How do we want our ridgelines managed?”

Land conservation easements are recorded at the town office like a deed, and kept in perpetuity. The individual land owner and the Land Trust negotiate the terms of the easement. There are three ways this can be accomplished: by purchase, (mostly done with operating farms); by a landowner donating the easement (the only way to do it with land in current use); by a state grant to an organization wanting to purchase land for preservation. (the grant application includes a conservation easement)

Joan Weir works with both landowners and groups. After a property has been conserved, the Stewardship Staff monitors the properties for compliance.

The landowner continues to pay taxes on the land, so the town doesn’t lose income from tax money. The Land Trust commonly uses a 50 acre guideline for properties to be conserved, preferring larger pieces of land rather than smaller.

If buildings exist on the land, they are excluded, but a future cabin site may be set aside.

People have to be willing to give up some value of the land if sold. But the conservation easement continues to the next owner.

Alison asked Joan how can Windham approach getting some land conserved? Joan suggested we can sponsor an event to get the community to learn about it. The commission can look at properties that are important to the community. Look at waterways or roads or trails that have community importance. Town forests are popular in the state, also town trails.

Nature Conservancy is another way to protect land, and they know areas they want to acquire. We should invite someone from that group to talk about what they are doing on Glebe Mountain. Alison will contact them.

2. We thanked Joan for coming and went to the regular meeting agenda. Dawn Bower moved that we approve the minutes from the April 30 meeting, Ginny seconded. Minutes approved.

3. the Rules of Procedure and Conflict of Interest were tabled for the July meeting.

4. Report on the visit to the culvert on Golding Rd: the existing trees we planted are growing slowly in the fill we planted them in. Barbara says that there are trout in the brook and the water stays cold!

5. Reports: Ginny did some research online about town forests, found a lot of them in the state. There is money from the state for improvements of town trails and forests, but Hal says the money goes to consultants. He said he will ask someone in the Nature Conservancy if they would be open to a town forest on Glebe Mountain.

Burbee Pond- Dawn is concerned about the Beaver Deceiver being altered by the road crew. She will ask Skip Lisle to come and inspect it, sometime in August. She will report then on his findings.

Interns for the town inventory. Hal will have more information next month. He will ask Rick Cowan if he will come and talk about how the Pinnacle Ridge Trail was acquired. It was a long, successful project.

Hal will ask Jamie French about how to get access to the trails on Meadows End’s land.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50. Nest meeting will be July 10.

Submitted by Ginny Crittenden