

Meeting Notes
Natural Resources and Conservation Committee
7:00 PM Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Attendees: Gail, Don, Bob, Jon, Christine, Chandler, Sean, Fred

Guest: Owen, Shelburne News reporter

- Gail called meeting to order at 7:04pm and welcomed new member Christine Haines.
- Bob volunteered to be minute taker
- Attendees reviewed the and approved the agenda
- Reviewed and approved May minutes – Motion: Don 2nd: Jon
- No Public Comment, but Owen from the Shelburne News introduced himself.

Gail suggested that we observe a moment of silence in recognition of the untimely death of Marty Illick.

- Development Review – No items requiring SNRCC review
- Discussion on regulatory reform and related bylaw changes was led by Don who has followed the process and work of the Planning Commission. Much PC discussion has been re; where to allow administrative approval rather than through the DRB with fencing as an example. Impact on wildlife movement was raised as a concern so editing to language is underway. Don also briefed the committee on discussions regarding extending Act 250 regulations on rare and endangered species. He also shared the subdivision regulations language where earlier NRCC involvement would be beneficial. Gail reiterated the NRCC preference to be consulted at sketch plan submission. Jon asked for clarification of the proposed decision process on fencing.
- Don and Gail led a broad discussion of Section 1930.3 of the zoning bylaws regarding locating buildings in wooded areas and what

changes would address the committee's concerns of forest fragmentation and habitat loss. It was agreed that a forest analysis was needed and funding options were discussed, including possible use of the open space fund. Gail pointed out that the fund has always been used for land conservation. Sean noted that using the fund for other purposes could start an undesirable precedent. Jon and Chandler offered to research possible funding sources. Don suggested requesting town funding for the forestry analysis.

- Sean moved to delete the specific language in the second sentence of C2 regarding building envelopes' location. Jon seconded. Gail abstained. The motion passed.
- Owen. From the Shelburne News asked about the purpose of the forest integrity project. Don gave a comprehensive explanation, referring to the work South Burlington has done.
- Sean led the discussion of CCRPC assistance with the Forest Integrity project and stressed the need for additional work building on what the committee has already done as recommended by the CCRPC.

- Other Business –

Gail suggested our next meeting be held in person with a zoom option. She reiterated the need for the NRCC to move forward without town staff.

Don and Gail pointed out that until and unless the NRCC is part of the formal development review process earlier, and without planning staff support, there is a major problem for the town, not just the NRCC. Gail spoke to the turnover of planning assistants and the current empty seat of that position, and noted that without Dean, as town planner providing the institutional knowledge and steady hand was a huge deficit.

Sean pointed out that the NRCC has always had professional staff.

Don recommended that the four committees: NRCC, Paths, Historic Preservation, Trees draft a letter recommending that an assistant town planner be hired. Gail asked committee members to contact members of the other committees they may know to learn if they share our concerns with the lack of staff assistance.

Don pointed out that the NRCC should make known to the DRB which projects other than major subdivisions SNRCC needs to be involved in early in the review process. Gail suggested those on water sources, those abutting Forest lands and wildlifecorridors and those in the Rural and Conservation districts .

There was a discussion of the recent LCA report and a request for water quality sampling volunteers. Gail suggested that LCA be invited to a future meeting.

Updates—

—Ewing—No public notice as to the DRB decision of the Ewing request.

—Rice—Blasting continues and it appears that the NRCC recommendation regarding the project raised concern that our recommendations have not been followed regarding where blasting and at what times of year blasting could occur.

Future meeting ideas include the Paths Committee, VT Land Trust and Pond Road amphibians.

Jon made a motion to adjourn, Fred seconded and the committee adjourned at 8:59 pm.