

Shelburne Natural Resources and Conservation Committee  
Regular Meeting, October 14, 2020.  
Minutes

In attendance: Dean Pierce, Gail Albert, Bob Paquin, Sean MacFaden, Fred Morgan, Jon Cocina, Chandler Noyes, Don Rendall, Taylor Newton (CCRPC), Mike Schramm (arrived 7:30pm)

1. Agenda.
  - a. Gail asked to add lamprey control to agenda
  - b. Jon moved to accept; Bob seconded; all in favor
2. Minutes.
  - a. Bob clarified his comment on economic development: housing development is not **long-term** economic development, relative to the establishment of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones.
  - b. Bob moved to accept minutes as amended; Don seconded; all in favor.
3. Development Review
  - a. No Section 600 letters.
  - b. Dean indicated that an imminent future application will involve the Farrington subdivision (in the next several months).
4. Forest Integrity Technical Assistance (discussion with Taylor Newton of CCRPC).
  - a. Taylor Newton, senior planner at CCRPC, described an outreach project for advancing municipal planning for forest integrity (Act 171). He described how Act 171 requires towns to consider forest blocks and connections between them. CCRPC can offer training on forest-integrity issues and drafting town plan provisions. It can also offer mapping help. The CCRPC has 15 hours to help Shelburne with this effort. As part of a draft scope of work, Taylor indicated that the first step would be mapping and then a second step would be amending planning regulations and standards (primarily for DRB review). A third step would involve revising the regulatory language after the initial stages of mapping and discussion.
  - b. Natural resources of interest include both biological phenomena (forest blocks, connectivity blocks, road crossings, wetlands, RTE species, significant natural communities) and physical features (steep slopes (>25%), floodplains, river corridors).
  - c. Don described how the committee has already performed some mapping but how it will be very helpful to have input on translation of these maps into specific regulatory goals. Sean described the committee's recent work to examine the distribution and size of forest blocks using new (2016) land-cover data. Dean suggested that we compare the committee's recent work to the analyses suggested by Taylor. Gail described how forest-block analyses must consider ownership patterns (the degree of parcelization) and how previously-developed properties affect future development patterns. Jon emphasized that the committee most needs help in drafting specific language (rather than general concepts) that would guide development review through its multiple stages (e.g., initial consultation with SNRCC, DRB hearings).
  - d. Dean, Sean, and Taylor will discuss the available mapping and report back to the committee, probably in December.
5. Budget Request

- a. Schedule and committee coordination. Gail described that the budget-formulation process will occur earlier this year. The SNRCC must draft its budget requests tonight in time for a Selectboard meeting in late October. Town committees are encouraged to plan their budget requests in conjunction with other committees. Bob asked whether this cross-committee collaboration applies to the annual operating budget or the open space fund. Gail indicated that it could apply to both. Bob, Jon, and Mike all indicated that the open space fund should not be combined with any other initiatives.
  - b. Open space fund request. Gail described how \$30,000 was allocated last year. She also described how, historically, the open space fund was not part of the capital improvement plan (CIP) but it was included last year (\$50,000 each year for the 6-year planning horizon for the CIP). Last year's request also included language asking the Selectboard to consider an annual allocation based on a fraction of the tax rate (suggested as a half penny). This year, the Selectboard has included \$30,000 in the draft CIP.
  - c. The committee discussed its recommendation for the CIP. The CIP is not a definitive allocation of funds; rather, it is a planning document. Sean indicated that he's comfortable with the \$50,000 per year recommendation for the 6-year CIP. Jon suggested that the CIP should show an escalating annual increment that reflects the town's historic support for conservation, starting with \$50,000 this year. Fred, Mike, and Bob concurred. Mike and Chandler described how the pandemic has powerfully illustrated the value of open space, and he agreed that the fund should escalate over time or that the tax rate-based formula should be used. Mike made a motion to recommend \$50,000 this year with a \$5,000 incremental increase on this amount each subsequent year until an amount equivalent to a half penny on the tax rate is reached, and he further recommended that the open space fund allocation be a specific ballot item each year. Bob seconded. All in favor.
6. Updates
- a. Bylaw changes. As part of an effort for conceptualizing an improved regulatory framework, Don presented a spreadsheet that attempts to set priorities for natural resources in Shelburne, including wildlife habitat and water resources. This spreadsheet will be distributed to the committee for individual scoring and comment. It will help guide subsequent discussions with Taylor Newton (see above).
  - b. Animal Coexistence Working Group policy. The working group has developed a revised policy statement on animal coexistence and it will be distributed to the SNRCC for comment.
  - c. Regulatory reform. The SNRCC, along with other committees and boards, has developed a list of potential regulatory reforms that would streamline development review. The committee has now been tasked with prioritizing its goals. Bob and Mike stated that the committee has already performed this exercise; they believe that additional work would only be duplicative.
  - d. Conservation projects. The new appraisal for the Ewing project has been completed but has not yet been distributed to project cooperators.

- e. Lamprey control. Gail described how annual lamprey control efforts by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, focused on rivers and streams that flow into Lake Champlain, are currently ongoing. In Shelburne, this work includes the LaPlatte River.
7. Adjourned at 9:10pm (Don motioned, Jon seconded, all in favor).