

# Topsham Conservation Commission

Minutes Approved 06/14/2022

May 10, 2022 at 5:30 pm

In attendance: Shana Stewart Deeds (Secretary), Victor Langelo (Chair), Steve Pelletier, Raija Suomela and Angela Twitchell (BTLT Executive Director). Also attending: Andrew Paradis (member of public), Meetings open to all, please contact the Topsham Planning Office if you'd like to join us.

I. Site walk looking at vernal pools and Hideaway Farm parcel between railroad tracks and river.

We met Angela Twitchell at the end of Katie Lane for a walk through of the Hideaway Farm parcel that the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust (BTLT) is hoping to purchase and conserve this June.

BTLT pays folks to mow the few of their properties that require it. This is typically done once a year in late August-October. Angela would love input on management of the Hideaway Farm parcel if the sale/conservation goes through. TCC feels that the fields should be kept as fields as there is habitat value. This would be best served by a once a year or every other year mow as late in the season as possible before snow (October) to allow breeding bird and other use of the field habitat.

The vernal pool was significant this year and in 2021 according to Steve's assessment. We saw wood frog tadpoles and spotted salamander eggs on our visit.

TCC members walked the site with Angela and feel that the parcel has conservation and recreational value. We discussed the possibility of a canoe/kayak pull out if steps/erosion control were added. It would be a lovely paddle from Head of Tide Park.

II. Approval of March 8, 2022 minutes and April 12, 2022 minutes.

Raija made a motion to accept the March and April minutes as amended. Victor seconded. All were in favor, so the minutes passed unanimously.

III. Debrief on CREA vernal pools presentation.

The CREA virtual presentation on vernal pools and the Topsham SAMP was well attended. There was a recent review of the SAMP by a developer, but decided not to go that route, likely for economic reasons. Folks think that the SAMP would likely work better on another parcel. Angela wondered if we might want to consider a minimum fee for using the SAMP. Perhaps we should revisit it as a community.

IV. Finalize roles for 2022 annual plan activity.

Deferred until our next meeting.

## V. Updates

- Rod is leaving Topsham to take a job in Bath. Should we try to zoom with him before he leaves at the end of May? This would include a review of budgets, especially his communication with Judy regarding the NAP update and providing funding for the Hideaway Farm project.
- Shana created a Vernal Pool folder in our shared files in the google drive. It consists of the existing VP conservation criteria folder, a document where we can keep track of possible vernal pools to review, and an excel file where we can enter information when any of us review vernal pools and have findings to report.

## VI. Agenda items for future meetings.

- Visit to Town Forest off Merrill Road. Steve recently (4/25/22) documented two Significant Vernal Pools during a brief recon of the parcel. A more comprehensive survey will be required.
- Decide on scope of work and outline of RFP for NAP update.
- Is the TSWF management plan addendum finalized? Do we need to officially submit it to the Town?
- Plant seedlings at Head of Tide if they are available.
- 2022 Annual Plan activities.
- Solar meeting with Topsham Solar Advocates to take stock