

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 9, 2023

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Dean Locke, Denise Ashman, Noel Dodge, Aurora River
Absent: Jackie Stanton, Jared Jasinski, Peter Hammond

The January minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Nothing was spent or gained last month. The lumber is still not bought. Dean will see if RK Miles will store it if we buy it now so it won't sit in the snow. The money in our budget needs to be spent by June 1, so projects need to get off the ground.

The Selectboard has agreed to put 250. in the CC's reserve fund after town meeting.

ROADSIDE MOWING

Denise gave a pile of good information and has concluded that we should prioritize parsnip, recommending mowing after bloom and before seed forms. The question is when is the best date to target mowing by the road crew? Denise will contact Bob Popp and/or Aaron Marcus to get a possible answer.

Lois recommends reading VTrans' roadside management sheet for road crews.

LAND MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Whoo hoo, we did it! The Selectboard has approved our plan and taken forms for distribution. We scrapped the 4-day turnaround plan in favor of making contact with a plan to follow up within 4 days.

We had a party to celebrate a good outcome after many months of work. Exceptional goodies were on the table, including Dean's peanut butter mousse in a rolled chocolate sponge, garnished with salted pretzel bits and crushed peanuts. Oh my. Thanks, everybody!

POLLINATOR PROJECT

Jackie won't take the lead but suggested David Perry, of the community gardens, who might be interested.

It was mentioned that the Skatepark occasionally uses the land for our proposed meadow for parking. We should talk to them. Perhaps we could have a joint project that includes Beautification, Skatepark and Recreation.

There are grants for pollinators that we can pursue. We would naturally include a focus on monarchs and asclepias in any plan.

This is a simple project. Steps:

- Identify the parcel, starting nearest the river; how big and where is it? Noel can do this on his doodad.
- Draw up a proposal and get permission from the Selectboard.
- Cancel the mower. Dean will reach out to him at the appropriate time.
- Make a plan. We can simply stop mowing and let nature take its course, which will result in pollinating grasses and flowers. Or we can rototill parts of it and seed them with flowers for faster results. Or we can rototill the whole thing, remove the grass, and broadcast seed, which is the best and most labor intensive method.

- Line up volunteer help, perhaps from VT Garden Network, Hardy Plant Club, Federated Garden Clubs.
- Create signage and educate folks about the benefits and need for pollinators and how they can do it at home.
- Once all that is done, the actual preparation and sowing should not be very time consuming.

MARCH GLADNESS

The Prindle snowshoe will kick off at 10:00 on Sunday, March 5, at the parking lot on Plot Rd. Eric Nuse will be there.

There's still no one lined up for March 12; it seems the several would-be speakers who were approached are too busy to respond. Or they're just plain rude. Sue is still looking for somebody to talk about pollinating.

ASH TREATMENT

A suggestion has been made that we team up with the Tree Board to proactively treat four good ash trees along the woodland edge at the Arboretum. Since the day will come when ash is very scarce due to EAB, it seems appropriate to make sure they survive at the Arb. Sue thinks the cost will be around \$800, which the Tree Board doesn't have. Sue will look into costs and report back in March.

BAT VIDEO

Much to our consternation, videographer Chris Demars has dropped out of sight, so Sue and Lois are on to Plan B, which is to speak with Elias Gillen about filming the video. He has produced nice work for the Historical Society. The new plan is a film with two bats in picture hats, sitting at a posh table, drinking bloody Marys, munching a plate of bugs, attended by butler Dean, talking about the bat housing crunch. At the same time, we can dispel unfounded beliefs like bloodsucking and hair tangling.

MISC

- So Peter, you'll "sorta" miss us??
- We missed you.
- Feel guilty?

Adjourned at 8:15

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary

Next meeting on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 6:30 at the Municipal Building