

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 14, 2024

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Dean Locke, Peter Hammond, Jared Jasinski

Absent: Jackie Stanton

Guests: Denise Ashman, Johna Keefe

The February minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No report was given. There were no new purchases.

NEW MEMBERS

Aurora has stepped down, resulting in two vacant seats on the board that need to be filled. Johna Keefe has indicated an interest in joining us. She fits the bill beautifully; she's an environmental science major at NVU with an enthusiasm for wetland issues, she bakes, and, best of all, she has a high tolerance for the rest of us. She'll contact the selectboard about joining.

Noel reports that Andrew Jasperson qualifies as a potential JCC member and he may attend the next meeting.

MARCH GLADNESS

The snowshoe trek was muddied out, due to unseasonable, soon to be seasonal, temperatures. No luck was had in convincing speakers to step up for Conservation Design or pruning. What to do? Has Gladness run its course?

Denise suggested that we present an educational program every two months and doing more planning ahead. We also considered weeknight instead of weekend programs. No consensus was reached.

FRIENDS OF THE CC

Dean was to assemble a list of potential contacts for work sessions and other affairs. He promises that next time will be the charm. He was told that the cost for that oversight would be a large, lemon-drizzled fresh blueberry cake, garnished with a tasteful bouquet of spring flowers.

GOMO PROJECT

On April 13, we will meet at Gomo for pruning and apple tree release. Noel has tools and Sue has loaned her pole pruner to the cause. Noel can bring his ATV and trailer for hauling equipment. We need helpers, preferably brawny young ones. We can also ask Eric Nuse.

As for the natural resource assessment/inventory Emily Potter agreed to do in October, 2019: Lois has asked LCPC's Melissa Manke to pursue it for us. Her initial query was answered with the message that the county forester is too busy and will follow up after others are serviced. We have heard this before, so we'll continue to pursue it.

VERMONT CONSERVATION DESIGN

We need to get this word out to the public so they can start to consider which lands in Johnson should be conserved. Sue will get a speaker on the subject for an evening presentation this summer.

BEE THE CHANGE, REVISITED

A second tilling and a cover crop was seeded last fall at the soon-to-be pollinator garden and the plan is to seed with wildflowers when it warms up this spring. Presently the third patch hasn't been begun and likely will be left to grow wild. The sandplain edges will be left alone and monitored for rare plants.

Casey Romero is pursuing a grant that would include the CC's work on Wescom. Lois will ask for wildflower seed in case the pollinator garden needs it; if it doesn't, we'll use it elsewhere. Denise will let Lois know what the cost will be.

We'll plan an event around the garden and get homeschoolers involved.

Mike the mower will again be available to mow around the gardens.

ALSO ON WESCOM...

An adjustment is needed on the base of a bat house there.

We have on hand the plywood for six new bat houses. One more is due to be installed at the Arboretum.

JOURNEY'S END

We haven't heard from the VT River Conservancy regarding the planned spring work at JE.

AUDUBON PRINTS

Peter will pick up a couple of pictures from Lois to show to an assessor.

RARE PLANTS

Sue attended a presentation by Grace Glynn, the new state botanist. They can do a rare plant survey that we should pursue. Sue will look into making that happen. It's important that we identify rare plants, put protections in place, and ensure that another fiasco like McCuin Island never happens again.

RIPARIAN CONCERNS

Johna Keefe has proposed a program about installing wetlands that she'll present to us at the April meeting. We'll subsequently support her presentation of it to the selectboard.

MISC

- The question from Jared was "So what's it now, Bee the Erosion?" Give that man a cigar!
- Noel reports that we'll get a survey from the Town Forest Consensus for each town property this spring or summer. We'll fill them out together.
- Noel is currently looking at the Ruggiano plan for the light industrial park. He'll do a site visit and will take us along.
- Noel will give a talk on raptors at NVU for the annual conference of the Vermont Botanical and Bird Club on the weekend of June 6-9.
- Where would we be without Noel?

Adjourned at 8:45

Next meeting is on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at the temporary library at the Masonic Temple

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary