

Cornish Conservation Commission - Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022, Town Offices, 7PM

Attending:

Regular Members: Corey Fitch, Chair; Jody Schubert, Vice-Chair; Linda Leone, Secretary Pro-Tem; Bill Gallagher, Reyer Jaarsma, Cindy Heath (via zoom)

Alternate Members: Bob Taylor, Rickey Poor

Select Board Representative:

Guest: Glenn Griffin

Absent:

Select Board Representative: Dillon Gallagher

Regular Members: Monica Matthews

Alternate Members: John Berry

Corey Fitch called the meeting to order at 7 pm at the Cornish Town Offices.

ACTION ITEMS (numbered by associated agenda item):

1. **NRI**. Linda will circulate a final list of the NRI workgroups and provide a copy of the NRI to everyone. Each group will select a lead person and begin scheduling their own meetings.
3. **Conservation Notes**: Members were encouraged to review the NOTES schedule and volunteer to write some of the articles themselves.
4. **Bylaws Review**: Article VI, Dredge and Fill – Corey will review for any necessary updates or re-writes. Article VIII, Finance - Corey will update this at a later time.
5. **New Alternate Member**: Commission recommends to Selectboard to swear in Glenn Griffin as an alternate member. Linda will update the CCC membership list appropriately.
6. **Funds Review**: Corey will research wording in the original CREA grant to confirm how funds may be used. **Also**, it was recommended that adding a return to 100% funding of land use tax change monies to the CCC as part of NRI goals.
7. **Land Monitoring**: Reyer will coordinate a monitoring walk of Brian Meyette's parcel.
8. **Subcommittee**: Subcommittees will meet, review their missions and progress and come up with a goal or goals for the Commission's February meeting. Also, a new Subcommittee, Climate Resilience, was appointed; Linda will update the Bylaws and Subcommittee list accordingly. Corey will provide a mission statement for the new Climate Resilience Subcommittee.
9. **Googledrive/Googledocs**: Corey will host a tutorial at 6 pm, just before the February meeting; it is recommended that everyone bring their laptop.

DISCUSSION

1. **CCC Natural Resources Inventory and a Presentation by Olivia Uyizeye, Planner and Sr. GIS Analyst at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC).** Corey introduced Ms. Uyizeye who told the Commission she has a Master's degree in environmental studies from Antioch College; she has been with the UVLSRPC since 2018 working with many communities such as Charlestown on their NRIs, utilizing data metrics from Upper Valley Land Trust, data updates and mapping work.

She noted that an NRI review should focus on how things have changed since the last NRI and include: analysis of local data changes and contacts, how farmland is used and changed, analysis of change in different industries (logging, forest management, agriculture, etc.), updates to mapping and a review of the action plan. Consideration should be given to additional chapters and topics (such as climate change and how it affects natural resources, ecosystem health, wildlife moving through landscape, industry), and incorporation into the co-occurrence analysis. Thought should be given to the tone of the document and how the NRI can be presented to the community in a way that will engage and be understandable – should there be two formats: a more succinct and “user friendly” presentation or story map version as well as the full document?

There was discussion about maps; Olivia's recommendation was not to clutter them with too much detail. Maps can be updated easily from providers like the UVLSRPC; check the source and request updates 6-mos in advance. Some maps may be based on data from community volunteers (Charlestown vernal pools, for example).

Corey reviewed the Commission's proposed workgroup/session process. The goal is to re-read it all in small groups, have updates due by summer and spend next 6 months on new sections and maps and bigger changes. Olivia commented that the timetable seemed generous and recommended getting requests for updated or new maps in by June or before.

Olivia provided some resources for NRI update research; these are included with the minutes. She offered to return to the group during the review/update process for further discussion. She logged off at 7:24 pm.

Corey asked the Commission members to sign up in small workgroups to study and draft changes to each section of the NRI Table of Contents; proposed review deadlines were applied to each group. **Action:** Linda will circulate a final list of the NRI workgroups and provide a copy of the NRI to everyone. Each group will select a lead person and schedule its own meetings. Each group should identify a “Next Step” or an “Action Step” at the end of each section.

2. **Previous Meeting Minutes.** There was one change to the draft minutes: Section 6, line 5, the word “control” was changed to “change”. With this one change, Rickey motioned that the

minutes be approved, Reyer seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **Conservation Notes.** Jody reminded the Commission that one article would be published each month. Cindy will prepare for January, focusing on groundwater and aquifers and the effects of climate change on these. In February, Jody's topic will be keeping local watershed/brooks clean, and in March Linda will cut her teeth on vernal pools.

Action: Members were encouraged to review the NOTES schedule and volunteer to write some of the articles themselves.

4. **Bylaws Review.** The following changes or actions were noted and will be finalized at the February meeting:
 - a. **Change:** Article IV, Section 2 Current Subcommittees: A new subcommittee was appointed by Corey and should be added to the list: *Climate Resilience Committee*. Bill Gallagher (lead), Corey Fitch and Glenn Griffin are members.
 - b. **Change:** Article V, Section 1 Regular Meetings, paragraph 3 should be changed **FROM:** *"Monthly meetings are normally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except the third Wednesday in the months of November and December, from 7:00PM to 9:00PM. The meetings are held in the Town Offices and shall be open to the public."* **TO:** *"Monthly meetings are normally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month."*
 - c. **Change:** Article X Amendments, first sentence: *"These bylaws may be amended, repealed or replaced by a majority vote of the regular members provided that notice of such change is given in the notice of the an upcoming meeting and not less than one month prior to such meeting."* The change is to remove *"and not less than one month"*.
 - d. **Action:** Article VI, Dredge and Fill – Corey will review for any necessary updates or re-writes.
 - e. **Action:** Article VIII, Finance - Corey will update this at a later time.
5. **New Alternate Member Candidate Glenn Griffin:** The Commission thanked Glenn for his participation in the membership process and expressed appreciation for his letter of interest and his eagerness to serve. Linda motioned that the Commission recommend to the Selectboard that Glenn be sworn in as an alternate member. Reyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
6. **CCC Funds Review,** Cindy Heath. Cindy noted the funds balances and land use change tax total as of 12/31/22 and referred the members to reports provided by Heidi Jaarsma (see **Attachments*). Conservation Fund \$171,875.11. CREA Development Fund \$7346.34. Palmer Fund \$14,264.86. B. Barker Memorial \$2111.93. CREA Barn \$381.22.

The Commission discussed the fund descriptions:

- a. CREA Development: Improve or enhance Cornish rec area on Town House and Parsonage Roads. Funds have been used for bridge repair, trail maintenance,

kiosks. It was questioned whether “repair and/or maintenance” fit the definition of “improve or enhance” and, if not, funds should not be used in this way. **Action:** Corey will research wording in the original CREA grant to confirm how funds may be used.

- b. Palmer Fund: used for environmental and conservation education, conferences. When the principal balance falls below \$10,000, CCC must initiate a fund-raising effort.
 - c. B. Barker Memorial Fund: may be used for out-of-the-ordinary expenses incurred during the work of the Commission, such as: CCC banner, brass plaques, etc.
 - d. CREA Barn Fund: funding for maintenance of the big red barn on South Parsonage Road on the CREA land.
 - e. Land Use Change Tax: There is a 10% state penalty tax for taking land out of current use. Reigh Sweetser collects these monies after completion of the town audit at the end of February. During hard times, 40% of the funds are diverted to the Town and 60% to CCC. **Action:** Further research and a focus on returning to 100% of these monies being given to the CCC should be considered.
7. **Land Monitoring:** Rickey noted that, including Peg Meyette’s land, monitoring walks and reports are complete except for Brian Meyette’s land. **Action:** Reyer will coordinate a walk even if he has to conduct it without Brian.
8. **SubCommittees:** Corey reviewed each committee, its members and mission. **Action:** Corey asked that the Committee lead people coordinate meetings with members to review their committee mission and come up with a goal or goals by the Commission’s February meeting.

Bill Gallagher noted that perhaps under the Land Conservation Strategy Plan or under the Land Monitoring Plan, the Commission should be tracking erosion along the CT River. This could be tracked through photography at specified points (Charlie Shurcliff’s and John Hammond’s properties were referenced) using landmarks or stakes to measure water rise/fall change from year to year. He encouraged participation in the CT River Joint Commission to which the Town sends two representatives (Olivia U sits on this Commission) **Action:** Corey appointed a new committee, the Climate Resilience Committee, to focus on this issue with Bill Gallagher, lead, and Corey Fitch and Glenn Griffin as members.

9. Google Drive/Googledocs: **Action:** Corey announced that there would be a help session at the February meeting and everyone should bring his/her laptop.
10. Fitch Farm Permit: Corey shared a copy of the forestry permit for a culvert at the Fitch Family Farm.
11. Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next meeting will be held on February 23, 2022, 7 pm at the Town Offices.

*Attachments→

NRI Resources from Olivia Uyizeye, Planner and Sr. GIS Analyst at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) who presented at the CCC meeting on 1-26-22.

- Town of Barrington's "Natural Resources Assessment" (basically a somewhat scaled down version of an NRI is my understanding). That is available here: https://www.barringtonconcom.org/barrington_draft_nra_070819/
- not an NRI but the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways conservation action https://mmrg.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/MMRG-Conservation-Action-Plan_final-report.pdf
- Town of Epping 2017 NRI <https://www.eppingoutdoors.com/resources/nri/>

You can also find more NRI resources and examples here -

<https://www.takingactionforwildlife.org/resources/resources-communities-conservation-groups>
(about half way down the page).

I've also listed out a short list of best practices from my perspective below.

- Celebrate your past successes
- Update the data. Review to make sure it is correct to the best of your knowledge
- Set priority areas based on local concerns, if modeling off an example
- Scout potential sites for priority protection
- Discuss action steps with those who may have a stake during the process
- Identify who will lead each action and when actions will be completed. Be reasonable but still ambitious
- Communication. Think ahead on how you would like this to land in the community. This will inform the final deliverable format.
- Connect the NRI to other planning documents and activities

CONSERVATION FUNDS
Year Ending December 31, 2021

		Conservation Fund	CREA Dev. Fund	Palmer Fund	B.Barker Mem. Fund	CREA Barn Fund [*]
Balance 12/31/2020		\$ 155,444.43	\$ 7,344.81	\$ 14,306.88	\$ 2,111.47	\$ 381.22
Add Receipts	Receipts:					
2020 LUC Tax due	11/19/2021	\$ 11,898.00				
2021 Appropriation	11/19/2021	\$ 4,500.00				
Interest: NHPDIP	YTD	\$ 32.68	\$ 1.53	\$ 2.98	\$ 0.46	
	Total Receipts:	\$ 16,430.68	\$ 1.53	\$ 2.98	\$ 0.46	\$ -
Less Payments	Payments:					
Corey Fitch/Saving Special Places	5/14/2021 #34102			\$ (45.00)		
	Total Payments:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (45.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Fund Balances	12/31/2021	\$ 171,875.11	\$ 7,346.34	\$ 14,264.86	\$ 2,111.93	\$ 381.22
Balance composed of Funds Deposited in NHPDIP and Claremont Savings Bank						
Bank Statement Balances						
Funds Deposited in NHPDIP	12/31/2021	\$ 171,875.11	\$ 7,346.34	\$ 14,264.86	\$ 2,111.93	
Less: Outstanding authorized withdrawals						
Add: Deposits in Transit						
Add: CREA Barn						
Fund Balances		\$ 171,875.11	\$ 7,346.34	\$ 14,264.86	\$ 2,111.93	
Difference		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	n/a

*CREA Barn Fund held as a liability on general fund balance sheet.

2021 Land Use Change Tax Commitment

		Committed
Chamberlin, Rober	M6L74B	\$ 4,700.00
Total LUC		\$ 4,700.00
Total		\$ 4,700.00

2021 Land Use Change Tax Due to Conservation Fund 12/31/2021

Due to Conservation Fund as of 12/31/2021: \$ 2,820.00

Collections Detail

Land Use Change Tax Collected 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2021

	Committed	Collected	apportionment	Town Portion	Cons. Fund Portion
Chamberlin	\$ 4,700.00	\$ 4,700.00	40%/80%	\$ 1,880.00	\$ 2,820.00
			40%/80%	\$ -	
			40%/80%	\$ -	
			2021 LUC Due to Cons Fund	\$	2,820.00

Uncollected Land Use Change Tax as of 12/31/2021

	Committed	Collected	apportionment	Town Portion	Cons. Fund Portion
			40%/80%	\$ -	\$ -
			40%/80%	\$ -	\$ -
				\$	-
					Uncollected LUC Due to Cons Fund
					to be deposited following audit of year collected
			Collected and Uncollected LUC due to Cons Fund:	\$	2,820.00