

Ripton Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, 2 December 2014 -- Mark and Barbara Nelson's home

Present: Warren King, Becky Purdum, Zapata Courage, Nola Kevra, Mark Nelson, Jay Harrington, Ned Horning, Martha McCaughin, Barry King (note taker)

1. Minutes of 13 August 2014. Motion to approve by Mark, seconded by Zapata. They were approved with one abstention.

2. Progress reports:

Warren explained the process of revising the Town Plan. He hopes we might finish our work on the Natural Resources Section in one more meeting (later revised to two.) Our task before our next meeting is to prepare the section we each agreed to do, email them to everyone else and then we'll go over them at the next meeting. We discussed trying to find a balance between language that promotes buy-in and language that is readily defensible in an Act 250 hearing. We want a strong Town Plan without causing resistance among our residents.

a. Town Plan Part II B: Earth Resources

1. Nola read a piece she wrote about the former Sparks Pit and the concerns of the people who live and recreate in the area about its continued use as a shooting range. She cited noise, drinking and garbage as concerns, in addition to the threat to safety. Nola said that other cleared areas in the National Forest are attracting shooters, too. Since Sparks Pit is on GMNFS land, there doesn't seem to be much Ripton can do. Mark suggested that perhaps the town could talk with GMNFS again and acknowledge that it is their land but that it is a problem for residents. Maybe such a discussion could lead to striking a balance as to how to clean it up and make it safe. We discussed this issue without coming to a conclusion.
2. Nola agreed that what she wrote isn't appropriate for the Town Plan. She will review the current Town Plan Part II B and make updates to it as needed. She will also look at the section on Recreational and Special Uses to see if something might be applicable there.

b. Warren: Town Plan Part II D: Biologically Significant Areas (Town Plan p.14-15 and Green Book, p. 80-84: Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species) Warren sent us a brief paragraph prior to the meeting. We felt it was sufficient although Zapata said she would work with him to add another sentence that references the current state regulations.

c. Becky, Mark, Zapata: Town Plan Part II F: Wetlands (Town Plan p. 19-20 and Green Book: Wetlands, p. 62-65) Becky revised the current section and circulated it to Mark and Zapata. Zapata had a lot of suggestions so she and Becky will continue to work on it for our next meeting. Zapata said she'd keep "sweet and sour sauce" in mind.

3. Divvy up remaining parts of Town Plan Part II to revise and present next time. Note: As we've discussed at our previous meetings, it seems that wildlife habitat considerations should have a bigger role in the next Town Plan. At this meeting, we will hear progress reports on three sections of the Town Plan. We will also divvy up the remaining sections of the current

natural resources part of the Plan, Part II. We'll meet again in 1-2 months. Between now and then, take the section(s) you sign up for and make whatever updates/changes you see fit. When we reconvene, please bring your proposed language. During your review and revision, please keep in mind the ideas and language from "the Green Book", *Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage*.

- a. Section A Land Cover (p. 11-13) - Barry
- b. Section C Soils (p. 14) - Martha
- c. E Air Resources (p. 15-16) – Warren, Mark
- d. F Surface Waters (p. 16-18), Ground Waters (p. 18-19) - Zapata
- e. G Forest Resources (p. 20-21), (Green Book: Contiguous Forest (p. 39-47), Connecting Habitat (p. 48-52) – Ned, Mark
- f. H Scenic Resources (p. 21) - Jay
- g. I Recreational and Special Uses (p. 21-22) – Zapata, Nola

3. Discussion of Middlebury College Bread Loaf Campus Conservation Easement – Warren updated us on this.

4. 2015 possible activities

- a. Water Quality Kitchen Chat with Addison County River Watch Collaborative director Matt Witten and others. We agreed to this. Warren will set something up with Matt which we hope can be open to the public.
- b. Visit to a vernal pool – let's do this in April
- c. Bird walk – we'd like to do another one in May
- d. Visit to a wetland – this could be in June. Discussed the issue of "crowd management" if we go to a wetland with more than just a few additional people. We'll discuss this again as the spring progresses.

5. Other business

- a. Warren and Zapata mentioned the River Corridor Base Map claiming that it is a bit hard to use. It corresponds fully to our Erosion Hazard Zone which is good. Here's the information. tinyurl.com/floodreadyatlas
- b. Warren and Zapata mentioned the Wetlands Inventory Map – we'll send a link or more info later.
- c. Mark discussed the Lake Champlain Cleanup and TMDL's. Each of the 12 areas of Lake Champlain will have to meet a specified TMDL for phosphorus. That will probably mean reducing the amount of phosphorous contributed by our roads, logging jobs and homes so it may require changed practices. See forwarded email for info.
- d. Mark brought up the Energy Independent Vermont initiative. Here's one of many websites you can check: <http://www.greenenergytimes.net/tag/energy-independent-vermont/>
- e. We also discussed the role of the planning commission in siting solar and windfarms and other issues where the Public Service Board renders decisions without needing to heed input from the town.

6. Schedule next meeting(s) We will try for a Feb. 3 meeting. Barry will send an email to make sure it works for most of us.