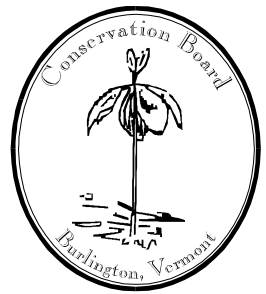


Burlington Conservation Board

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*Rebecca Roman, Chair
Caryn Connolly, Vice Chair
Zoe Richards
Don Meals
Ryan Crehan
Hannah Brislin
Leslie Spencer
Kyle Tansley
Ethan Ely
Elizabeth Cunningham, Student*



Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 3, 2025 – 5:30 pm

Remote & In Person Meeting

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Caryn Connolly (CC), Rebecca Roman (RR), Leslie Spencer (LS), Don Meals (DM), Ryan Crehan (RC), Kyle Tansley (KT), Ethan Ely (EE), Elizabeth Cunningham (EC)
- **Absent:** Hannah Brislin (HB)
- **Public:** Sharon Bushor (Public Comment)
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Dan Cahill, Cindi Wight (Parks & Rec)

RR, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Minutes

January 6, 2025 minutes

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by RR:

Approve the January 6 minutes as written.

Vote: 7-0-0, motion carried. (No RC yet)

Board Comment

SG mentioned the 389 Riverside Ave hazard mitigation grant project. The demolition contract was just recently signed. The property will be converted to green space. He noted that the boat storage proposal for the Community Sailing Center has been deferred at least until after a wetlands assessment is performed. He also said that there have been a few Open Space Plan outreach events this month – the Winter Farmers Market, the New North End Plan kickoff event, and the Sea Caves. There will be more in February, including Winterlude and Winterville.

RR said that VT F&W is hosting a series of training events around the science of planning and from planning to action. RR also mentioned she went to the Winter Farmers Market for the Open Space Plan public outreach. (RC appeared at 5:40 PM)

ZR mentioned the cat ordinance meeting. She attended. There is consideration of limiting free-ranging cats within the city. There was substantial support for addressing the matter. DM said he wrote a letter to his city councilors in support of the measure.

RC thanked Dan Cahill and Daniel Schmidt for all of their work with the Sea Caves event.

Public Comment

The programs and services of the Dept. of Permitting & Inspections are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188.

Sharon Bushor said she also attended the cat meeting. She supports keeping cats indoors. She said she's interested in the Conservation Legacy Fund grant item. One of the applicants was not recommended for funding at all. If partial funding is recommended, is it known right away if the project remains viable? If there is money left over, does it carry over to the next year?

Open Space Subcommittee

No meeting today.

Update & Discussion

1. Conservation Board Meeting Locations

Discussion of meeting location

DM prefers the 645 Pine Street location due to its proximity to his house. RC asked about the Sharon Bushor conference room in City Hall. SG, I can check, but its likely unavailable. RR said she likes meeting here at 311 North Ave. Its close to her, but its also the conservation building. It's a new space, close to the lake and community gardens. ZR said she feels similarly. LS said she had a slight preference for the South End location. CC said she'd continue to attend remotely, so either location is fine. RC does not have a preference.

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by RR:

Recommend staying at the 311 North Avenue location and reconsider in June.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried.

2. Conservation Legacy Fund Grant Applications 2025

Review of funding recommendations for the 2025 grant cycle

Dan Cahill appeared on behalf of this item.

Dan Cahill overviewed the review group and evaluation process. We are hoping for approval of the review committee's slate and then forward it to Parks Commission and then to City Council. If all is approved, we'll work with the applicants to coordinate project preparation and execution. This is year two of the Legacy Fund grant program. This year, there is ~ \$180K, inclusive of monies left over from last year.

RR mentioned that Dan Cahill and Daniel Schmidt have worked with the applicants throughout the process, including follow up about partial funding awards and how that would work. DM said the partial funding decisions accounted for specific parts of the grant proposals. The amounts were not arbitrary. RR said the Rock Point Commons proposal was centered on compost. It was a different kind of project and did not align well with the implementation strategies in the Nature Based Climate Solutions Addendum. ZR noted the intentional flexibility of the implementation matrix. RC suggested having this as an annual Board item (it is).

DM pointed out that the requested funding exceeded the available funding. We may want to invite unsuccessful applicants to come in and ask the question, what was wrong with my application? The intent would be to generate better and better proposals. Dan Cahill mentioned last year's similar debrief with applicants. We should continue to do so. The Board has the opportunity to establish annual themes for applications.

A MOTION was made by EE and SECONDED by DM:

Approve the recommended slate and forward it to City Council (via Parks Commission).

Vote: 7-0-0, motion carried.

3. Northshore Wetland Property

Update as to potential city acquisition

Cindi Wight appeared on behalf of this item.

Cindi Wight overviewed the item. Parks has received an EPA grant through the LCBP for acquisition of this property. It may not be entirely certain at this point given the situation with the federal government. The property includes two parcels and a class one wetland. Wildlife habitat, education, aquatic management, and public access are priorities. There is potential for boardwalk access into the property. A community engagement process has begun. There will be additional outreach efforts throughout the project. We are collaborating with Burlington Wildways and connecting to schools through the NBCS project. The project timeline includes due diligence, feasibility and stewardship, and finally construction (if approved). The grant with LCBP needs to be finalized as a next step, then acquire the property, and finally develop and advertise an RFP.

DM, what's the current state of public access to the property? Cindi Wight, there is a stairway into the property now. There are fences on the property to limit access in places.

RC asked about the acreage. Cindi Wight, its about 15 acres.

ZR, do you still get questions about management of the beach? Its not managed currently. Dan Cahill, there's no intent to start raking the beach. Leave the driftwood.

Cindi Wight said \$1.2M has been approved for the acquisition. We may come back for Legacy Fund monies to help bring the property to standard. ZR, we want to be sure to address conservation infrastructure in the Open Space Plan.

RR, will there be an easement on the property? Cindi Wight, there will be an EPA easement on the property. It will come with deed restrictions. RR, who stewards the deed restrictions? Cindi Wight, not sure if EPA or LCBP, or possibly NEIWGCC.

Adjournment

6:40 PM.