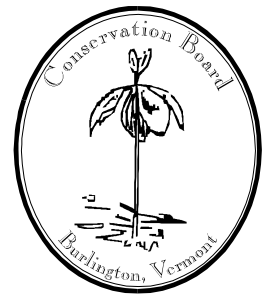


Burlington Conservation Board Open Space Subcommittee

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Open Space Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2026 at 4:30 PM

311 North Avenue, Conference Room or Remote via Zoom

Present: Scott Gustin, Dan Cahill, Zoe Richards, Rebecca Roman, Dale Azaria, Kate Krusei, & Sharon Bushor.

I. Public Comment

Sharon Bushor spoke about a birds piece on 60 Minutes recently. She also said she's not sure what the Tree Board item is about, but she'd support the Conservation Board serving in that role.

Kate Krusei agreed with Sharon Bushor's comments as to Tree Board.

II. Discussion Items

- Potential role of Conservation Board as Tree Board

Scott overviewed that Parks Commission is the tree board now but is not engaged in the role. Working on the Tree Ordinance, it seems that the BCB would be a better fit. The Tree Board would play a role in review of tree removal, tree plantings, and be a resource for the city arborist and land steward.

Dan elaborated on the potential role and noted the ongoing ash tree management and the benefit that a community forum could have had. What could have been different in that process if there had been an active tree board? Dan also mentioned the ongoing discussions around tree removal offsets.

ZR is this a state recognized thing? Scott replied that it's a Burlington thing and that a charter change may be needed to make the change.

DA, how might things we'd do as a tree board relate to the Open Space Plan.

ZR mentioned the specimen tree map as well.

Scott mentioned there's current provision that just requires DRB (not Conservation Board) and there's no provision for offset for tree removal.

Those present were supportive of going in this direction.

- Nature Based Grant Pilot for Stewardship Zones

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Dan said this item relates to the Tree Board. We've been thinking about resources to put towards stewardship zones. The focus is on plants, ecosystem services, and wildlife. What about starting with ecosystem resilience work in stewardship zones that have lost ash trees?

ZR recapped what stewardship zones are in the Open Space Plan.

Kate Krusei, it seems like a template could be created for utilization outside of stewardship zones too. Emphasize appropriate stewardship like leaf litter mulch around new native plantings. It would be great if some stewardship models could be put together.

ZR, the thing that's new here is trying to facilitate folks doing something ecologically appropriate in their own yards.

Kate Krusei, consider incentivizing small micro-forests in back corners of yards.

Dan noted the concept of a "soft landing" for areas to regenerate over time where ash trees have been lost.

RR asked for clarification around the "pilot" concept.

Dan said an amount of CLF monies could be set aside to support this particular work. Dan mentioned folks' interest in service work. This coming fall, he'll be meeting with the NPA's to promote service work and this pilot.

III. Executive Session

- Acquisitions

IV. Adjournment

5:29 PM.