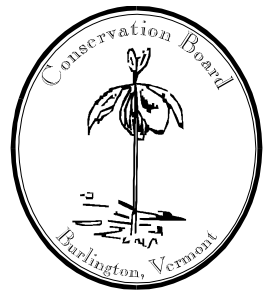


Burlington Conservation Board

645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/dpi>
Telephone: (802) 865-7188

*Zoe Richards, Chair
Rebecca Roman
Don Meals
Miles Waite
Ryan Crehan
Hannah Brislin
Jules Lees
Caryn Connolly*



Conservation Board Meeting Public Notice

September 13, 2021 at 5:30 PM

645 Pine Street, Main Conference Room or Remote

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82836591544?pwd=TKl4Rm9PeVBsSDFoci91ejFSOVMrdz09>

Webinar ID: 828 3659 1544

Password: 065384

Telephone: +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833 or
+1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Agenda

- I. Minutes (5:30) – Accept minutes from August 2, 2021 meeting**
- II. Board Comment (5:35)**
- III. Public Comment (5:45)**
- IV. Update & Discussion (5:50)**
 - 1. Draft Open Space Addendum review**
Work session with Resilience Planning & Design to review and comment on draft
[Open Space Protection Plan Addendum](#)
 - 2. Visioning the future of the Conservation Board**
- V. Adjournment (7:00)**

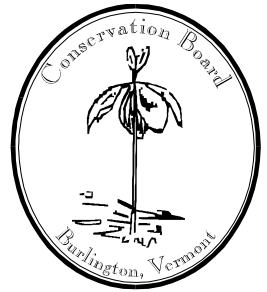
Note that agenda times are approximate only.

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Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 2, 2021 – 5:30 pm
645 Pine Street, Main Conference Room

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Miles Waite (MW), Rebecca Roman (RR), Ryan Crehan (RC), Caryn Connolly (CC), Don Meals (DM)
- **Absent:** Hannah Brislin (HB), Jules Lees (JL)
- **Public:** Sharon Bushor, Nora Laymon, Marjorie McWilliams, Libby Rhodes
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Cindi Wight, Dan Cahill, Alicia Daniel (Parks & Rec)

ZR, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Minutes

CC noted that her last name has two n's.

A MOTION was made by MW and SECONDED by RR:

Approve the meeting minutes of July 12, 2021 as corrected.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried.

Board Comment

ZR requested that Board members introduce themselves for the benefit of our new Board member, Caryn Connolly.

RR asked about the remaining board vacancy. SG suggested letting folks who might be interested know about the vacancy.

RC said he's been involved with pollinator work and establishing plantings at the old landfill along Manhattan Drive. A walking path has recently been made for folks to access the area. Mowing has been delayed to allow plants to reach maturity.

MW noted 453 Pine Street and Andy Simon's participation at last month's meeting. SG said that, as requested, Parks staff will meet with the BCB in September as a next step to talk about Parks' history with the property – what's been considered and discussed already. MW noted the BERA funds that are available for development of the property. ZR asked if the monies available are near what it would take to remediate this property. MW, not sure. DM said that most of the past proposals involve leaving the contaminants in place and minimizing disturbance.

Public Comment

Sharon Bushor said that she's is very interested in the Open Space Addendum. One of her first priorities as a councilor was to generate funding for open space conservation. She still cares deeply about open space and how it dovetails with the environmental crisis the world is facing. She said that some folks are reckless with removing trees. She'd like to see a draft and to be able to comment. She also mentioned

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the steep slopes discussion. She's very interested in seeing this item through. We lack protections presently along these areas in the city. MW said that her comments are welcome. Tonight is a brain-storming session about what standards might include and look like. ZR thanked Ms. Bushor for the city's original Open Space Protection Plan.

Update & Discussion

1. Invasive species management in the Intervale:

Interns Nora Laymon, Marjorie McWilliams, Libby Rhodes appeared on behalf of this item.

ZR asked Dan Cahill what the perennial internship is. Mr. Cahill said UVM's Rubenstein School has a perennial internship program. It involves articulation of a project with solicitation of applicants to work on it. McKenzie Park is a perennial internship site for working on knotweed. We've got a great group working in the Intervale this year on invasives management.

Interns presented their slides as to project background and a variety of methods that have been employed to manage invasive species in the Intervale. Methods spanned traditional weeding to use of goats to gleaning and use of invasives as food.

DM noted prior efforts to use goats to manage kudzu in the southeast.

Interns note future projects include making knotweed paper.

2. 311 North Ave – Stone Cottage Project preview

Cindi Wight appeared on behalf of this application.

Cindi Wight noted that this is a preliminary informative presentation. 311 North Ave has become Parks' conservation space. The park will be named later this summer. She overviewed the history of the land purchase. The city, VHCB, LWCF, private donation and other monies were used to acquire it. The land is under a conservation easement, and the building under an historic preservation easement. The land and building are tied to outdoor recreation and conservation in perpetuity.

Ms. Wight noted the multiple moving parts in the Rock Point conservation easement. There's more than just buying the land. Monies are sometimes needed to bring the land up to standard for public access and recreation. She noted the trail work that has been done at Rock Point and new bike racks. The River's Edge Marina conservation project was similar – including structure demo and re-naturalization of the property. About 12% of the overall budget was used for demo and site work.

Ms. Wight reviewed the proposed renovations to the building at 311 North Avenue, including the site plan and building rehabilitation. She overviewed the grading plan and the planting plan for the path connection to the waterfront bike path.

ZR said that if we want to conserve properties and have them be publicly accessible, we need to account for what might need to be done to bring them up to an acceptable standard. Ms. Wight, speaking about the connection to the bike path, said there will be a lot of disturbance to this land. ZR pointed out that the land was purchased as an urban wild.

Ms. Wight said 31% would become 29% of the overall project funded by the Legacy Fund, including the proposed work. She noted that the fund presently has \$590K available.

DM is there any consideration of making some of the pavement pervious? Ms. Wight said it's anticipated in the walkway design. DM asked about the parking lot. Ms. Wight said she's not sure, but it may be possible. RR recommended more pervious surface now versus waiting to replace traditional impervious

surface with pervious surface later. DM noted the concept of stormwater parks to demonstrate various stormwater improvements.

ZR asked Dan Cahill to talk about some of the public facing improvements at the property now. Mr. Cahill said a number of transition zones have been pointed out showing how plantings can change and evolve over time. Food security is integrated as well. Signage has been installed for folks to learn about the plants. We are considering a conservation mix for the meadow that involves edible plants. This site gives us an opportunity to think about urban wilds next to VT's largest development. Alicia Daniel said this property can provide similar services to a ranger station in a national park. Mr. Cahill also said there have been monthly listening sessions with former residents of the orphanage with the intent to include an interpretative space at the property.

Sharon Bushor asked if clear cutting is needed as described. Mr. Cahill said yes, in order to meet ADA grades. Ms. Bushor said a serpentine path was installed at Salmon Run to limit disturbance. She said that some folks may be shocked at the level of disturbance when the path is installed. Mr. Cahill said some community events are planned for folks to come and learn more about the site.

DM mentioned the recent experience on his street when it was torn up to replace the water lines. The project included a dedicated person to listen to resident concerns and to mitigate them.

Ms. Wight said there is an anticipated \$250K ask for additional legacy funds. \$136K per year goes into the fund. \$40K of the \$590K is already dedicated to a different project.

CC asked about timelines. DM said he wants to avoid completely depleting the fund. He said he's enthusiastic about this project. MW noted that this project will end up receiving the largest amount of legacy funds. RC said the big question is whether this project lines up with the intent of the fund.

ZR said that a reevaluation of the legacy fund is warranted as part of a rewrite of the Open Space Protection Plan. We need to give consideration to public accessibility of our conserved lands.

MW, have different funding scenarios been considered? Has the mayor been consulted? Ms. Wight said the mayor is supportive. Multiple different sources and funding methods have been considered.

Ms. Bushor asked if Parks has approached Eric Farrell about contributing to the effort. Ms. Wight said he'll help with the path work.

RC said it would be helpful to itemize the costs associated with the anticipated Legacy Fund ask. Alicia Daniel said this is a unique opportunity for conservation education in Burlington. Mr. Cahill said we could host a Conservation Board meeting at the property in the coming months.

3. Discussion of proposed steep slopes standards

SG overviewed this item. Riverside Avenue is driving the discussion. Presently, the CDO contains limited steep slope standards, but they do not address review or performance criteria. They are simply discounted from buildable area calculations in the RL, RM, and RCO zones. At a minimum, we need a standard to require geotechnical analysis of a slope to determine whether it can safely accommodate a proposed development. Rather than go in a case-by-case basis, he suggested use of a citywide steep slopes map, similar to the wetlands map. He showed a draft map of 15% + slopes citywide that had been put together by Gustave Sexauer.

DM cited a slope area reference for erosion control – the universal soil laws equations. DM, we should not necessarily use an average slope over a minimum span metric. We don't want to include a flat area in the average. CC, we need to cite a certain setback distance from the slope.

DM, is it possible to reasonably stabilize the rest of the slope not being built upon? Is there a tradeoff to allowing construction on a steep section if the rest is stabilized?

RC, Riverside has pretty modest structures as contrasted with what Redstone built at the top of Depot Street.

Sharon Bushor said what can be done appropriately depends on what the slope consists of. Along Riverside, much of the slope is fill. It really does matter what the soil borings show. Developing to the edge of the slope is dangerous.

MW, we need to make sure the soil borings have been done and that a geotechnical assessment has been done to determine suitability of development. We need to define standards.

RC, maybe we should prioritize certain areas like Riverside for assessment.

RR clarified that this discussion is about the points to incorporate into steep slopes ordinance language. She said an ordinance with flexibility is preferable to one that is uniformly applied everywhere.

MW said that first thing to do is determine if there's a risk. RR said there should be minimum standard for review and also to specify for review by whom (like BCB).

Open Space Subcommittee

1. Discussion of Potential Open Space Projects:

ZR said this is a follow up discussion of what might be shovel-ready projects for nature based climate solutions. Federal funds are anticipated in the coming months for implementation work. ZR said we don't know details yet, but if folks have ideas, let us know to see if we can get things funded.

DM, something bold and new that would not ordinarily be funded should be done. ZR mentioned the trees that came out of 311 North Ave that are now at Champlain Elementary School. There's huge potential on school district property to do less mowing and to plant more trees with public involvement. Can we have localized nurseries? Can we use school children to collect seeds and plant them? Utilize existing oversight and structure.

RC said some of the biggest climate challenges we've got are the large storm events. Can we do more to keep inputs out of our CSO's? Maybe we could provide a funding source for more pervious paving.

Adjournment

7:42 PM.

These are the page numbers and sections from the document:

p. 9. On top of the second column, no time frame is mentioned. Is the 80,000 tons per year? It should be clarified.

p. 34. In the green box, there is a typo in the last sentence of the first paragraph. It should read "many reasons" not reason.

p. 36. In the case study, the first paragraph should have the word "exacerbated" instead of "exasperated."

p. 37. After the word "According," the word "to" should be added.

p. 41. The last paragraph ends without any punctuation and doesn't continue on another page.

p.49. 2.20 should have the word "can" added to "how this ____be institutionalized."

3.1. Remove the word "the" before Burlington.

Caryn

Don Meals comments on Open Space Addendum

p. 6 Is the word “combat” the right one here? Much of what the addendum presents relates more to resilience and mitigation, not just fighting

p. 7-8 Rather see footnotes/citations of original work, not Digger stories

p. 9 Second “sentence” beginning “From the smallest planting....” is not a complete sentence

p. 9 Paragraph on sprawl is kind of a non-sequitur and the point is arguable. Should Burlington promote/accept higher development density in an attempt to reduce sprawl, while having no say in development in surrounding towns that is proceeding rapidly? Effective regional planning would be nice, but not currently effective.

p. 10 - provide citation for “Oxford’s NB Solutions Institute”

- While important in themselves, I don’t think womens’ empowerment and youth employment are really useful metrics for the success of NBCS, at least not in terms of measuring improvements in ghg emissions, forest preservation, wetland protection, flood resilience, etc.

p. 11 Like to see the full page of NBCS definitions much earlier in the report

p. 13 and elsewhere the word “data” is plural, e.g. should say “...data were reviewed...”

p. 14 OS graphic – is the 42% tree canopy coverage for all of Burlington or just open space? I see that it is specified later in the text, but should be clarified here

re: agriculture and gardens – community gardens are far from the only individual gardens in the city. I have a 500 ft² garden in my back yard and so do many of my neighbors. I’ll wager that if you add up all the individual gardens in my neighborhood, the total square footage would be greater than the nearest community garden site (Calahan Park). Should at least acknowledge that better and amplify the benefits of all gardens, not just community gardens.

p. 26 In discussing protection of trees, you need to note the importance of tree health in the urban environment. The implication of the current narrative that tree-cutting should basically be prohibited is not appropriate. This will promote an attitude of “don’t ever cut trees” which is simplistic, dangerous, and wrong. See City Hall Park controversy.

p. 37 re: TNC stat claiming that mowing lawns releases close to half of soil carbon. This seems highly suspect, unless it includes the emissions involved in mowing. Even so, it needs to be better documented

Also, the report is pretty thin on recommendations to improve the situation on lawns/turf. Include less frequent mowing? Higher cut? Electric mowers?

p. 40 re: green infrastructure. Pretty thin on what individuals can do. Also need to note that City regulations need to be more friendly to individual GI actions. For example, I put in an

expensive pervious paver driveway to replace asphalt and got no acknowledgment from the City, much less any decrease in my stormwater fee or bonus on lot coverage after I reduced the impervious cover on my lot by 20%.

Re: implementation recommendations

1.2 Requiring strict replacement of all cut trees is not practical nor is it always acceptable

1.5 What does “better understand” deer issues mean? Should be a recommendation for something specific

2.11 Converting greenbelts to food gardens may not always be a good idea – risk of soil contamination, salt and other road chemicals, sight distance from driveways to roads

3.9 Already have state shoreline regulations and City overlay – how is what you propose different?

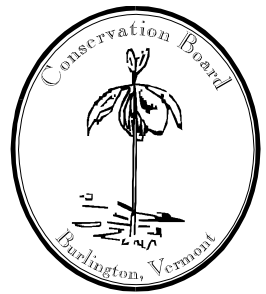
5.4 City does not have a strong program for promoting pervious surfaces on existing private property. At least there should be a lot-coverage bonus if a property owner reduces their impervious cover significantly. Also, DPW needs to be educated on how to maintain and restore an installation if they disturb it.

5.14 re: the median on Main St. thru UVM – various plantings have been attempted before and have failed each time. Why should expect different?

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Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 13, 2021 – 5:30 pm
645 Pine Street, Main Conference Room and remote access

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Rebecca Roman (RR), Ryan Crehan (RC), Caryn Connolly (CC), Don Meals (DM)
- **Absent:** Jules Lees (JL) Miles Waite (MW), Hannah Brislin (HB)
- **Public:** Steve Whitman, Liz Kelly, Sharon Bushor
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Alicia Daniel (Parks & Rec)

ZR, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Minutes

A MOTION was made by RC and SECONDED by DM:

Approve the meeting minutes of August 2, 2021 as written.

Vote: 5-0-0, motion carried.

Board Comment

RR said that the Association of VT Conservation Commissions is having a summit over the course of a few Wednesdays this month and next. She'll send a link with info. Alicia Daniel and Judy Dow will be presenters.

SG noted that ARAP funding request has been submitted under deadline and includes a few possibilities involving the Intervale Center, staffing, and capacity building. He also mentioned Riverside Avenue and the properties with a slide in October 2019. He's met recently with VT DEM, CCRPC, and DPW staff as to potential buy-out options for the properties to convert them to green space and mitigate future landslide possibilities. All three property owners have been contacted, and all three are open to the possibility of a buy-out. ZR suggested asking about whether additional properties should be included. SG said he'd follow up with DPW.

Public Comment

Sharon Bushor thanked us for pursuing monies for addressing the slope instability along Riverside Avenue.

Update & Discussion

1. Draft Open Space Addendum review
Work session with Resilience Planning & Design to review and comment on draft Open Space Protection Plan Addendum

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Steve Whitman and Liz Kelly appeared on behalf of this item.

Steve Whitman provided a brief background of work that was done over the summer months. He is looking to identify clear edits tonight.

ZR reminded the Board that this is an addendum to the plan. We are aiming for a complete update to the Open Space Protection Plan in the next couple of years.

Liz Kelly asked if there were any Board comments on CC's comments. None were noted. She asked about DM's comments. ZR asked that Board members provide their initial thoughts first before getting into the weeds.

RR said she really liked the evolution of the addendum – the layout, the green boxes, the case studies, the plans that we've identified and described. It's very accessible and readable. It's pretty with a balance of text and imagery.

DM said he agrees with RR as to the look and feel of the document. The rest of his comments are in writing.

RC said he really likes it. He'll send written comments along to SG. Overall, it really fits what we're trying to do and make stuff happen.

CC agrees with comments so far. Loves the look of the plan. She felt immersed in it and learned a lot reading it. She agrees with DM's written comments as to trees. She's concerned with implications of removing invasive tree species and having to plant more. More specification is needed to appropriately address such situations.

Alicia Daniel is impressed with how this project has kept moving in the right direction. The text is quite readable and comprehensive. She thanked Steve Whitman and Liz Kelly for being so open to suggestion. The idea of bringing nature based solutions to the forefront and noting the need for 1/3 of total investment in combating climate change is very significant.

RC, it would be helpful to have photo captions.

Liz Kelly picked up on DM's comments. She asked Board members for thoughts about DM's comments on sprawl outside of Burlington. Effective regional planning would be nice but is not present. ZR said that by some logic, we should build in our natural areas to reduce sprawl, but that's not the point here. There is a balance in here that we need to acknowledge.

RC said that if we consider impervious surface along Church Street and Hannaford's, they are probably similar but have very different characteristics and community benefits.

RR fears that our emphasis on protection of natural areas may sway people to not build housing in the city. The intention is to center the balance of resources and development in the city. Mr. Whitman, we should probably de-emphasize the sprawl component of the paragraph subject to DM's comments.

ZR, maybe as we move towards the comprehensive open space plan update, we should consider the scale of values of natural areas and open spaces within the city.

Alicia Daniels commented that we'd like development to more thoroughly consider NBCS as we move forward.

Liz Kelly asked Board members if they concur with DM's suggestion to move pg. 11 earlier. ZR said she'd be fine with the move. Alicia Daniels commented that it's one of the strongest sections of the document.

Liz Kelly noted that they will reference the source for DM's comment about mowing lawns and carbon release on pg. 37. DM said that the details behind the statistic are needed (i.e. gas powered lawn mowers). RC said he likes the local examples to demonstrate points in the document, such as those with established low mow zones. Mr. Whitman asked if Board members have specific examples. RC said the city probably has good documentation for the Urban Reserve before and after.

Ms. Kelly asked if anyone had comments as to the implementation recommendations.

RC said there could be something more along the lakeshore itself. The city has done a bunch of rip rap in recent years that we should push back on. The idea of a floating wetland is not where he would focus resources. They would be better used to naturalize these rip rap areas.

Mr. Whitman said the issue of tree canopy cover is that we don't want to see a reduction, but understand that it may move around. We don't need to leave problem or dangerous trees in place. Details can be teased out in an updated tree ordinance, not necessarily in this document. He asked about DM's comment as to better understanding deer issues. DM said the deer issue that the Board has heard about a few times is the depredation on crops in the Intervale. We need to recognize the conflict between the deer herd and urban agriculture. CC said that part of the problem is that our city and surrounding development has encroached into where they live. ZR said that warmer weather and lack of natural predators has contributed to an increasing deer herd that will cause problems in the long room.

DM said that perhaps spaying or neutering deer could be effective. RC said we should pursue adaptive management strategists for forest regeneration. RC agrees and noted that public education should be part of the solution.

RR, signage and communication should be part of most actions. ZR said that Alicia Daniel has been working on educational signage with Parks.

RC asked about prioritizing protection of unprotected parcels south of Main Street and Appletree Point – how where those called out? Mr. Whitman said that the south end was driven by the lack of conserved lands currently in the city.

RR said that she felt like the equity section could be condensed a bit – made more direct. She'll offer follow up comments. CC, maybe there's a way to more specifically call out the sections coming from the city's Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap.

Public Comment:

Sharon Bushor – Said that an executive summary would be helpful. The document is lengthy, and such a summary would be helpful for Planning Commissioners and City Councilors. This document speaks to smart development and is right for today. She's concerned that incentives can be successful – she feels that regulation is more effective. She also mentioned the current zoning standards for tree clearing. The 2-acre minimum is too large. She supports the language about no-till gardening and mentioned the city's current pesticide ordinance. She supports small, low maintenance pocket parks. She also reiterated that we're dealing with a climate crisis.

Continued Board Comment:

ZR asked about next steps. SG noted that the addendum is an action item tonight or next month. Planning Commission review will occur after this, and City Council after that. ZR suggested sharing the draft with Parks and DPW. DM said that we could share it with them but not request approval. RR said perhaps we could highlight specific areas we'd like feedback on.

A MOTION was made by RR and SECONDED by DM:

Approve the draft Addendum with comments as noted and move ahead. Solicit comments from Parks & Rec and DPW by mid-October and go to Planning Commission the 1st meeting in November.

Vote: 5-0-0, motion carried

2. Visioning the future of the Conservation Board

ZR said that we can take this up more substantively next month. Let's ask folks to talk to the board about things like the city's tree ordinance and phosphorous in the lake. What sorts of things would other board members like to learn about?

Adjournment

6:56 PM.