

Strafford Conservation Commission

Minutes

May 28, 2024

201 Justin Morrill Mem Hwy (Colbeck house) 7-8 PM

Micki Colbeck, Courtney Potter, Anne Fayen, Mike Hebb, Kate Bass, Kitty Mackie, JT Erbaugh,
Erin Yunger

1. Approve minutes from April 23, 2024, meeting.
2. Reviewed the new loupes that were purchased.
3. David Paganelli healthy forest program was very interesting. 40 landowners, foresters, land managers, and just interested folks attended. Possible help for emerald ash borer – bio control in experimental stage. Leave the small ash trees for the future. Town is taking down roadside ash trees. Should we start a free tree program to replace trees? Why was red maple chosen to replace the unhealthy ash on the green? Vermont may have been spared the Ash death devastation of the upper Midwest because our forests are more diverse.
4. Mike: When does a village become a town and lose its aesthetic charm? Loss of roadside trees for shade and wildlife; too many signs cluttering the road; paved roads.
5. Mike suggested the park and ride for a possible kiosk location. Kate and Micki will scout it out and write up a proposal to the Selectboard. We agreed that we can take turns caring for it and making sure the documents were up to date.
6. Our guided hike series is going well. Steve's vernal pool hike was well attended. Micki and Tii's Spring ephemeral hike was cold and rainy but had a great small group of serious naturalists (4). The first Orchid hike with Micki and Mike had around 13 people, some who have never hiked. It is a little tricky with a long line of folks and two guides. Dates

of future hikes will be updated on the town website and Facebook site. Hike leaders need to talk to landowners beforehand, especially if there is a parking issue.

7. Trails report: J.T. did work on the ledges trail and Kitty worked on the Alger Brook to Pennock trail. We now have six loupes to lend out for the hikes.

No updates on the Rec board's Village to village bike trail.

8. The selectboard informed us that to serve on a town board, one must be a registered voter. We had considered opening the board to high school aged students who expressed a strong interest in our natural environment.

9. Discussed the possibility of designing a "Strafford Quest"

10. Several of the trails have had the yearly cleanup completed.

11. Micki reports that the trees in Skylar's field are doing well.

12. Discussed submitting a tentative budget for Old City Falls for the next ten years for the town's capital budget. Kate will talk to Kelly Harmon to see the implications of this. The proposal will include funds for lumber, trail work, signage and siding for outbuildings.

13. Change venue to town office. It was agreed to move our monthly meetings from the Colbeck house to the town office so to make it more open for non-board members to attend.

14. Next meeting June 25th, 4th Tuesday.

15. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes by Courtney Potter