

## STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

September 26, 2017

### MINUTES

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7 p.m. were commission members: Kate Root, Mike Hebb, Jared Jenisch, Steve Faccio, Dave Paganelli, and Steve Willbanks, Chair.

- **Minutes** from 8/29/17 were approved.
- **Hemenway Bench:** Kate provided an update on the cost and specifications of the bench. There was discussion of the details, particularly centering on whether it should be 4 ft or 5 ft long; some were concerned that the 14 inch width would be too narrow for a 5 foot bench. Silas Treadway has offered to oversee the installation and has done it before. This would likely entail flat stones under the legs for support. Representatives of the granite company have said that engraving on the horizontal surface of a bench is generally not a problem as far as standing water is concerned because granite is porous and will absorb water. The cost of engraving is around \$300-400; \$110 minimum, with an additional \$5.25 per letter (for letters 2" high or less). The inscription "John Hemenway, living on in Forest Time" was proposed. A motion to approve the concept carried and it was agreed that details would be worked out by email.
- **Special report:** Dave spoke on the threat to ash trees from Emerald Ash Borers, a tree-boring insect from Asia that arrived in pallet material from China. It was first found in Detroit in 2002. The insect kills only ash trees, but all ash—brown, green, and white. There is a 100% mortality rate. There are currently ash borer populations in Albany, NY; MA; near Concord, NH; and just over the border in Quebec; populations don't seem to be advancing quickly. Infestations proceed at first slowly and then very rapidly; for the first five years of an infestation it is hard to find an insect, in the second five years it is hard to find an ash tree. Exit holes are small; native ash borers make 1/4 inch exit holes that are round, emerald ash borers make smaller, 1/8 inch exit holes that are semi-circular in shape. Almost everyone who has large stands of ash is cutting it for timber sale. Vermont forests are 5-8% ash so a full-blown incursion of emerald ash borers could fundamentally change the makeup of our forests.
- **Trails:** Mike has encouraged volunteers to trim summer branches on the town trails; he has added 1.2 miles of trail to bypass two landowners who no longer want trails on their properties. Later this fall Bob Wilson will repair the road up to Whitcomb Hill. Mike is still working on repainting blazes along the trails.
- **Wetlands:** Kate and Jared, along with Mike, made the last two wetland visits of the season, bringing the total up to eight. Steve suggested that a list of visited wetlands might be included in the Town Report.
- **Zoning:** Steve spoke on the Select Board's decision to double the size of the two village centers.
- The next SCC meeting will be October 24th.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jared Jenisch