

MINUTES, Wallingford Conservation Commission

Monday, February 26, 2024, 4:30 PM Town Hall (downstairs)

Call to Order at 4:40

Roll Call: Dennis Duhaime, Denise Eddy, Carol Macleod, Ralph Nimitz, Jane Quigley, Debbie Scranton. No guests, no public comments. Two openings for WCC. Marc Pramuk will not rejoin the commission but will help on projects.

Election of Officers for the 2024-2025 Year

Co-chairs - Ralph Nimitz, Denise Eddy

Secretary - Debbie Scranton

Treasurer - Carol Macleod

Canopy Grant (Annual)

We will work with Tree Warden, Rob Barker, on a tree canopy grant for the following year and invite him to attend our next meeting to discuss his Shade Tree Preservation Plan.

Trex Recycling Program (revised 1/2024)

Dennis Duhaime reported that since 1/1/2024, the town has collected 1251 pounds for the Trex program, qualifying Wallingford to acquire another bench for the town in 2024. David Castonguay from Clarendon was okayed by the transfer station to continue to drop off plastic for Trex monthly.

Casella has a huge initiative by 2030 for more community outreach. Denise Eddy personally (not on behalf of WCC) wrote a letter to Casella encouraging them to participate in the NexTrex Recycling Program. Wallingford impressively took out of the waste stream 4600 pounds of polyethylene plastic to recycle into Trex in 2023.

Invasive Plants - Public Outreach

Dennis Duhaime spearheaded getting Lars Lund of the Dept. of Agriculture into having this hands-on program on invasives at Stone Meadow on May 18 (same day as library plant sale) from 10-12. Will check with format that L. Lund prefers, D. Eddy can provide additional invasive plant samples. May later schedule a workday on removal. Ann Awad has begun work on knotweed eradication at corner of Waldo Lane, RT 140, has measured the area, has free mulch, will need more tarps.

Tiny Grants

At this point, we have no need to apply for a Tiny Grant (\$250-\$600 by April 15).

Budget

\$2025 in our CD from volunteer work at Stone Meadow by VCS. Of our \$2500 for the current year, we have \$2305 remaining to spend by June on reimbursement for wood duck houses, signage on the Otter Trail, refresh signage (Skakel tree, Klock and Upton benches), new tree identification signs, bee supplies, and as needed.

Cabin Fever Fun Day

February 18 (postponed), and February 25 (cancelled), both to no snow cover
We might have a similar activity on the April vacation, with hot dogs, etc. and suitable seasonal activities, like a scavenger hunt or other games, nature walk.

House Bill HB706

Dennis Duhaime asked if we may contact the legislature in support of this bill, by writing a letter to the Agriculture Committee. This bill is to outlaw the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, outlawed for a number of years in Quebec, and outlawed last year in New York State. Widely used as a pesticide in crop production, killing a wide range of target and non-target species, but are particularly harmful to bees and other pollinators, and often applied to seeds before planting or to soil, and having the entire plant present with the insecticide. Use versus non-use of this insecticide has a negligible effect on most crops, but fruit trees may benefit. We agreed to support this bill in a letter from the WCC, the initial draft to be written by Dennis, with comments, etc. from the commission before sending.

Old Business (Stone Meadow)

Insulation and ventilation at the hives reported to be good. In the Fall, four hives were active. There are many dead bees on the ground. Today, in the warm weather, bees were active at one of the hives.

The first stage of the grant for the Elfin Lake Erosion Reduction Grant is complete, and will contact the Town Administrator when this has been finalized, and when we need to work on the new grant for the implementation of the erosion plan like for a Fall Planting, or a planting next Spring 2025.

New Business

Denise Eddy suggested that the WCC might be involved with the up-coming Solar Eclipse on April 8. Deb Scranton will contact local astronomer Houghton, and the elementary school. The WCC can discuss possible activities at our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM. Next meeting will be Monday March 25 at 4:30, Town Hall

Respectfully submitted, Debbie Scranton