

## Burlington Conservation Board

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*Matt Moore, Chair  
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Zoe Richards  
Stephanie Young  
Sean Beckett*



## Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 11, 2017 – 5:30 pm  
Planning & Zoning Conference Room – City Hall Lower Level  
149 Church Street

### Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Stephanie Young (SY), Miles Waite (MW), Don Meals (DM), Ellen Kujawa (EK), Jeff Severson (JS), Matt Moore (MM)
- **Absent:** Sean Beckett (SM), Scott Mapes (SM)
- **Public:** Gannon Osborn (LCLT item)
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Planning & Zoning), Dan Cahill (Parks & Rec)

MM, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### Annual Organizational Meeting

The Board had a discussion of a system wherein the VC becomes the Chair. DM said that's how the CCRPC works. MM said he's happy to continue to be chair if nominated and elected. He's open putting a cycle in place too. He's open to letting others chair too.

ZR likes the idea of having a term limit but doesn't want it to be mandatory. She thinks it's healthy to rotate. MW said he's willing to be chair at some point in his tenure. SY agreed with ZR. EK agrees and thinks similar term limit should apply to VC. DM is generally in favor of a rotation scheme.

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by SY:

Nominate MM to serve as chair for 1 additional year. Tonight chose a VC. Next July, VC will step into Chair for a longer 3-year term.

Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried.

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by SY:

Nominate MW to service as Vice Chair.

ZR clarified that the VC will become Chair in July. Affirmed. DM suggested 3 year term limit.

SG mentioned bylaw amendment will be needed to establish succession and term limits. 3-yr term limit.

Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried.

LRPC member: MW explained what the committee is and does. Basically, they focus on long range plans for the city. Broad city-wide issues.

A MOTION was made by MW and SECONDED by DM:

Nominate EK for Long Range Planning Committee.

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Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried.

### **Minutes**

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by MW:

Approve the minutes of August 7, 2017 as written.

Vote: 5-0-1, motion carried.

### **Board Comment**

DM said his pervious pavement driveway is done. He said it works well. The permit was closed out with a CO. He said he did receive certification from the Blue program. He said the City of Chattanooga is interested in the same program.

MM said he received an email from the Vermont Assn of Conservation Commissions about an upcoming summit. He'll distribute to Board members.

### **Public comment**

None.

### **Open Space Subcommittee**

#### **1. LCLT – Rock Point Easement**

Gannon Osborne appeared on behalf of this item.

MM said this is a 20-acre conservation and public access easement. We've provided \$19,720 already. The parties are working towards a closing. The project is connected to the larger conservation effort at Rock Point. They are back to request additional funding to close the deal. (JS appeared at 6:00 PM). MM said that the Open Space Subcommittee members supported the request.

ZR, this parcel is the large piece behind BHS.

Gannon Osborn said the easement would be purchased form the Episcopal Diocese of VT. He's been working with Parks & Rec along the way. The public fundraising campaign came up a bit short. He is looking to keep the acquisition on track. The additional request is for \$13,200.

MM, the additional funds bring the total grant past the 40% noted in the standards for the BCLF. The total amount granted would be \$32,920, which amounts to 66% of the total \$49,800 budget.

JS, for the \$19K already approved, which pieces of this work were included in that? Mr. Osborn, there was a similar budget, but there were no stipulations as to what dollars were used for which portions of the conservation effort. MM, was there a sources and uses budget? MW, how much is covering staff time? Mr. Osborn, nothing out of the \$19K has been reimbursed yet.

DM said he's bothered by the large portion of the total project cost the BCLF is being asked to fund. He's concerned about setting a precedent. It's a worthy project. The next one in line may be too.

Dan Cahill agrees that we should look closely at it. This project is part of a larger conservation effort in the area. LCLT's fundraising efforts have been impacted by what's going on in the larger picture.

DM does not like setting the precedent – the BCLF as an easy ask to cover funding shortfalls.

MM, did you ask VHCB? Mr. Osborn, yes, we've been engaged with them. LCLT is looking to use VHCB funds for the next, larger pieces of this conservation puzzle.

ZR, we do have to think about precedent. It's not, however, a huge sum of money. It would be crazy to let this fall apart over \$13K.

JS, as to funding staff time, the amount of money that's used for staff time is maxed out. Should we spend the conservation dollars on any staff time? MM, Dan Cahill's time is not in this budget. Dan Cahill cited the provision – 30% of the fund. JS, the request is using conservation dollars to fund outside staff time. It seems to be double dipping. JS said that \$11K amounts to staff expenses. Mr. Osborn said the stewardship endowment goes to ongoing stewardship of the parcel. JS agrees, but we should be trying to leverage funds rather than holding out for something later.

MM said that we should engage general practices, but we are not bound by precedent. SY, Dan's explanation made me more comfortable with the present request. It's part of the strategy within the larger picture. We don't have to approve every time.

MW said he's not comfortable going beyond 40%. There should be further efforts to seek matching funds. Take closing costs off the itemized budget. Come back next month.

SY, doing that would risk success of the effort. Mr. Cahill, why is staff time such a big issue? JS, how much of anybody's staff time is funded? The fund should be leveraging conservation, not outside staff time. He'd like to know better how this piece fits into the bigger picture.

MM said the 30% is for city staff time (Land Steward position). The 70% is for acquisition costs generally. DM thinks the 30% applies to administration generally.

JS, when the fund was established, it was decided that 75% would be used for acquisition and 25% for other costs. The 25% has now become 30%. The fund wasn't set up to use the full 30% to fund the Land Steward position.

SY read the resolution that established 30% for the fund's operational costs.

MM, what if we stipulate the additional funds be used 100% for land purchase costs? Mr. Osborn said he does not have an issue with that.

ZR, it would be helpful to have a discussion of what's included in acquisition costs. JS agrees. He'd support what MM just suggested. He thinks staff time of outside organizations could potentially be used as matches in funding requests.

MW, if we provide the requested funds, that amounts to 114% of the total easement cost. He proposes limiting the granted funds to 100% of the easement value. That would leave them \$4K short.

DM would like to see a permanent cap of 40%. MM does not support the hard and fast cap. EK asked where the 40% came from. Mr. Cahill said that the 60%-40% was established to foster partnerships and leveraging with other funding sources. EK, are we the last resort? Are there other options? Mr. Osborn said he is not personally involved in fund raising. There are other sources out there, but that would delay the closing and risk success of the future pieces of this conservation effort.

ZR thinks keeping flexibility is a good thing while adhering to the spirit and intent of the guidelines.

MM, seemingly the deal could still close if they end up \$5K short. Does the fund go towards outside staff time? We should discuss and establish clear guidelines. He does not want to go there right now. We should not decide policy on this small request.

A MOTION was made by JS and SECONDED by MW:

Recommend \$28,800 for funding towards the total budget.

Discussion:

MM, your motion is to approve funding up to \$28,800 (net \$9,080 of new funding).

ZR, would like to support the full request but does not want to kill the request.

SY, supports ZR's comment.

MM is not comfortable shorting the request. He does not want to get hung up on the staff time question on this request. We need to address that as a board as a matter of policy.

DM said that because we're two members short, if 3 members vote against, the motion fails. We need a vote of 5 to carry.

Vote: 3-4-0, motion fails

A MOTION was made by ZR and SECONDED by EK:

Support the \$13,200 request

Vote: 7-0-0, motion carried

JS, will you please give us an update on the bigger picture in the coming months? Mr. Osborn replied, yes.

## **2. WVPD – River's End Marina**

MM said that Nick Warner attended Open Space Subcommittee meeting. He's secured site control of the property. An appraisal has been done and he's in the due diligence phase. He's got a general idea of the overall budget. There's a marina there now. Some degree of boating access will remain. There may be renaturalization of the area. Buildings will be demolished. He will likely have a funding request in a couple of months, around a third of total project costs. DM, is it reasonable to have our discussion as to cost breakdowns beforehand? Board members agreed.

## **3. Funding update on 12-acre Cambrian Rise conservation parcel**

Executive session at 7:15 PM.

Exit executive session at 7:25 PM

### **Project Review**

#### **1.18-0258CA; 8 College St (Ward 4N, RCO-C) City of Burlington**

Slope stabilization within lakeshore buffer at Northshore

Defer. No applicant present.

### **Update & Discussion**

#### **1. Bike Path reconstruction – rare plants protection update**

JS, this is not meant to be a critique of Parks & Recreation. It's about considering what we do moving ahead. VHB never did a study of the construction impacts on RTE plants. BCB should have asked for something more formal to make sure it happened. Moving ahead, there was a quick reaction from VHB when it was brought to their attention. It seems to have happened because we asked for an update. In the future, we should close the loop by making a formal request that what was proposed was actually done and how it worked.

MW, when Parks & Recreation comes into present, RTE should be a checklist item we remember to go over with them. JS, handle like we handled stormwater.

Mr. Cahill said that the amount of resources and energy going into new plantings was more of a focus. We can be sure to pay attention to this matter in future work.

## **2. Conservation Trails Initiative**

ZR said she's had an initial meeting with facilitator Stephanie Lahar. The group is working towards having a summit in early December to put together the framework for this ongoing effort. There's a lot of positive movement towards making a cohesive trails system in the Arms Grant/Rock Point forest. We may seek dollars from the BCLF. It has cost about \$15K to hire a consultant and have a summit. Councilor Dean will contribute funding towards the effort.

## **3. Board Priorities for the upcoming year**

- Change the bylaws re: Chair and Vice Chair terms
- Discussion of acquisition funds in BCLF and staff time (in-house vs outside)
- 12 acre Cambrian Rise conservation parcel – conservation easement
- Conservation Trails initiative
- Development Review – energy efficiency/conservation (city & state standards)

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:49