

## **Town of Danby Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)**

Minutes of Video Conference (Zoom) Meeting on  
Tuesday, June 8, 2021  
Danby, New York

**Council Members present:** Clare Fewtrell (chair), Joel Gagnon, George Adams, Don Schaufler, Margaret Corbit, Jonathan Zisk, Mary Woodsen,

**Council Members absent:** Brittany Legaly

**Others present:** Elizabeth Keokosky (secretary), Ronda Roaring (Danby resident), Ted Crane (Danby resident), Mark Holochuck

**Zoom Meeting was officially called to order at 7:05.**

**Deletions or Additions to Agenda:** Fewtrell suggested moving agenda item 6 (Easement updates – main business on Wimsatt Easement) to follow item 2 and deleting agenda item #4 (Website and Rack cards – since not much has happened on this item)

**Privilege of the Floor (PoF):** Roaring let the group know that she is interested in an easement for her property (since smaller properties are now being considered) and would like to schedule a initial walk on the property in September after the birds have finished breeding.

**Approval Minutes MOTION for May 13, 2020 (with Joel's changes made that afternoon; also Schaufler's correction of 3500 from 5000 board feet for a tri-axle truck load)**

**Gagnon moved to approve**

**Fewtrell seconded**

**Unanimous approval**

### **REPORTS AND UPDATES**

#### **1. Easement Zoom Workshop Report – Zisk**

Zisk reported the presentation went reasonably well. John Jansen had some interesting questions. Testimonials were fairly low key

Gagnon reported that it was all positive and no negative feedback, but Zisk said it was not a big crowd and perhaps could be repeated again with a bigger group.

## **2. Invasive Species Talk Report – Gagnon for Lagaly**

Talk was straightforward and given mostly on Japanese knotweed and hogweed. Unfortunately the the highway crew had been set up with one monitor so it was difficult to type in individual questions, even though they would have preferred to be more interactive. Gagnon will put presentation on CAC website.

## **3. Easement Updates – Fewtrell**

Discussion of Wimsatt Easement. The documents reviewed were:  
Wimsatt Easement v.14  
Schedule B with 9 Appendices  
Schedule C

CAC Members felt it was a very thorough document. Gagnon said that he and Fewtrell had gone through it with land owner's lawyer and the town board multiple times.

In the process of writing this easement many questions had been raised about the Danby easement template on which an easement is normally based. The process had been complicated this time by the fact that Art James, purchaser of parcel C had jumped ahead and created an easement himself based on an existing (publicly available) Danby easement rather than let CAC put it together in the usual way.

Fewtrell said the lesson learned was to keep the easement template as vanilla as possible. PoF: Crane remarked that making no changes is not the goal. And Fewtrell corrected herself to say more clearly that she thought it was important to keep template simple and only make changes if prospective easement owners requested them.

**Gagnon made a MOTION to recommend to Town Board that they accept Wimsatt easement.  
seconded by Fewtrell  
Unanimous approval**

Gagnon said that it would be put on the agenda for next Monday's Town Board meeting. Fewtrell asked if there were still pieces to put together. Public hearing scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> - 5 days from the time legal notices posted. Problem was that the Schedules were very big to download and go through. Hayden Brainard is the attorney for the Wimsatts and has to give the OK.

Fewtrell said that discussion of changes to Easement template would be put on the agenda for next CAC meeting.

Other easement possibilities:

- Corbit mentioned that Brad Rauch, who owns property at the corner of Peterand Travor Rds, may be willing to donate an easement. She will follow up on it.
- Gagnon said that he hadn't heard from Dan Hoffman and Mark and Micaela Karlsen lately. They may be applying for a planned development zone.

#### **4. Easement Signs – Adams**

CAC members discussed the current quote Adams presented from Voss. It displayed prices for easement sign options on aluminum or plastic stock with the prices for both orders above 25 or orders above 50. Adams shared his screen.

Since 40 signs were estimated to be needed, getting 50 is a much better buy.

There was some discussion over who would be keeper of the QR code since it would eventually need changing if the URL for CAC easement information changed. Adams laid out the options to do this: use a service for a dynamic QR Code or make the town clerk, Janice Adelman, the keeper. It was decided to go with the town clerk, so keeping the service within the continuity of the town.

Since the durability of the paint on the wording was the limiting lifetime factor it was decided (since both plastic and aluminum had environmental problems according to Schaufler) to go with plastic (though Woodsen objected to plastic) since the paint (according to Zisk) comes off plastic less quickly.

**Fewtrell made a MOTION to buy 50 plastic signs  
seconded by Adams  
All voted in favor except for Woodsen, who abstained**

Fewtrell suggested giving signs to easement holders when annual inspection was done, which others were enthusiastic about.

*(Here Fewtrell lost internet connection for some time during a heavy rain storm. On her return the meeting continued with the below:)*

**5. Easement Website & Rack Cards – Corbit & Woodsen**

Corbit mentioned that she had done some clean-up edits of old/current CAC web page, but there had been no progress on new website (due to Town Clerk involvement in work elsewhere) or rack cards. Schaufler still unable to reach Jenny Caldwell. Gagnon took on task to trying to get through to her.

**6. Logging Ordinance – Adams, Schaufler & Zisk**

Discussion of version 5.5 of the draft logging law (Local Law to Amend the Zoning Ordinance)

Still some questions raised about how to handle exemptions when you don't need a permit. How to let the town know it's happening but not force people to fill out complicated forms?

Corbit suggested a paragraph with a checklist. Schaufler's suggestion was to make a flowchart to show decision choices to decide whether or not a permit is needed. Corbit noted that right now there is a shortage of lumber so it is economically viable to sell 4 logs, which doesn't fall within current parameters.

Gagnon asked if we had gotten feedback from Highway Department and Code Officer. (They hadn't yet). He said to talk to Jack Shawley at 227 9728 or Steve Cortright. PoF:Secretary Keokosky suggested calling them for an outdoor appointment (and taking some cookies) since they were unacquainted and Adams might benefit from talking to him face to face.

Gagnon said that the town board might want to review the ordinance before sending it to town lawyer to review.

Fewtrell urged this working subcommittee to use their combined expertise, and get the task completed.

## **7. Changes to Easement Template – Fewtrell & Gagnon**

There was some confusion among members as to whether suggested Easement Template changes stemming from Gagnon's and Fewtrell's experience with Wimsatt easement were worthwhile and should be made. Also an email attachment that was sent earlier as prep to this discussion could not be found by some.

Corbit proposed that CAC members look at suggested changes but not let the Wimsatt easement dictate changes to the template. Fewtrell agreed but added that there still might be appropriate changes to make now. For instance, the new Forestry Zone had never been approved by the town board. Gagnon noted that there should be some place where specific solutions used in past easements could be noted as a list of available examples.

In discussing the template, Gagnon noted that Article I and II are the meat and potatoes. Articles III and IV were more boiler plate.

The conclusion was that Fewtrell would re-email the working template, the Wimsatt Easement, and various email comments to pull everything together in one place and CAC members should get back to her by June 22.

## **8. Planning Group Working Group Reports – Joel Gagnon, Jonathan Zisk & Betsy Keokosky**

Fewtrell recommended filling in David West's questionnaire to help determine placement of businesses. The Conservation Working Group agreed to keep the suburban neighborhood zone (though Gagnon disagreed and Fewtrell abstained). Zisk noted that there are two "different tribes" that have different tastes. Plodding through to make constraints and incentives. He noted that the walks David West organized allowed people to meet each other in person (after only meeting through Zoom).

Keokosky reported on the Ag Working Group and gave some sense of who had come to the last meeting and what was in the preliminary report to the planner on zoning recommendations. She quoted from this report's "Basic Assumptions"

- Farming is as important as forests and wildlife to achieve the rural aspect Danby wants to preserve.
- Farmers keep fields mowed, orchards growing, and farm animals present, contributing to both the aesthetic and working economy of the community.
- The work of farming is critical to maintaining rural community and providing an antidote to the pressures of becoming a suburban, bedroom community of Ithaca.

There was some discussion about whether there was backing for an Ag Protection Zone but this issue is under continued debate.

**There was no Executive session**

**Next Meeting** via Zoom is on July 13th at 7p.m.

**Adjournment at 9:09**

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Submitted by Elizabeth Keokosky (Secretary)