

Charlotte Conservation Commission
Draft Meeting Minutes
March 26th, 2024
Town Hall and on Zoom
7:00 pm

**Maggie Citarella, Maggie Korey, Claudia Mucklow, Sharon Mount,
Roel Boumans, Pete Demick, and Susan Blood.**

Guests:

**Bill Stuono, Charles Russell, Frank Tenney, Natalie Kanner, Carrie Spear,
Paul Plante, Nate Caress, and Alexa Lewis.**

Action Items:

- Susan- bring card and honey from Pete to Mel!
- Meet with Nate to figure out how to move forward with one-pager.
- Add iNaturalist to the website?
- Pete - figure out the cost of more wildlife cameras - we'll discuss next meeting.

1. Meeting Call to Order

2. Nature Notes - and introductions!

Hawks, foxes, deer, bluebirds, kestrel, herrons, beavers, robins, mice, Canadian geese, rabbits, opossums, bears, owls, bobcat, and American woodcock!

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

Add Election of Officers in Administration section.

Comments about Planning Commission updates.

Wetland Concern behind Town Hall.

4. Public Comment

Bill Stuono - The updated map came up at a PC meeting along with the statement that we have

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conserved 30% of our land here is Charlotte. 30% is not conserved - some is under open space agreement. Larry said we've met the [30 by 30 goal](#) (30% of land conserved by 2030) undeveloped land. This is a statewide goal. If you put Charlotte in the context of Chittenden County, there are lots of towns who will not be able to reach 30% so we should have more than 30% conserved.

Next Topic - Village Planning Project - The whole premise of this exercise is based on the assumption that Charlotte has water and sewer. It's debatable that we will ever get that. It's private land. With Act 47, then we can build houses on a fifth of an acre. Our village centers are small, have wetland concerns, bad soils etc.

Next Smart Growth - this is a statewide planning goal for the entire state - dense town centers surrounded by rural areas. Lots of people in Charlotte are closer to Hinesburg and Shelburne which have the amenities - grocery stores, hardware stores, restaurants etc. - that Charlotters need. It's hard to make the village walkable. We're never going to have the amenities in our villages that Shelburne or Hinesburg has and so the only houses we should add to our village centers should be affordable housing. We should reserve our town centers for businesses, amenities, and affordable housing.

What are the forces that bring the increased pressure for development in Charlotte? There is a historical assumption that we will grow the town centers but it doesn't work environmentally. Do we need an envisioning session about affordable housing?

We did give input for preserving natural resources in the Town Plan to the PC.

Remember, our town centers don't have everything that people need to live here. So anyone who moves to the town centers will need to drive to other town centers anyway. We have limited capacity in our villages.

Frank Tenney - Owns a mobile home park is in effect low income housing. If anyone owns land in the village, the owner has to want to build.

Charlie Russell - [Town Plan from 1969](#) - it's on the website!

Our growth rate is now is about .4% per year but here are some interesting percentages!

The number of houses in Charlotte increased by this percentage *per decade* -

42% for 1960-1970,

42% 1970-1980,

23% 1980-1990,

13% 1990-2000,

5% 2000-2010 and

4% 2010-2020.

So the growth rate *on average* in the 60's was 4.2% per year. In the 2010's it was, *on average*,

.4% per year.

Charlie and Carrie have been looking at old maps of the town! Would be cool to see how development occurred. Let's have a MAP party! :)

With Planned Residential Development (PRD) Zoning the houses will be clustered.

Carrie Spear - Where is the pressure coming from? Not from developers. Where do we find a place for people if we can? Let's try and look forward and see where we want the villages to be 100 years from now. There's no water or septic coming. But if we were able to take the east west line between the 2 villages that goes through CCS and perhaps have some development there - that might be one idea.

It would be nice to see village centers to get a little refurbished. The Corner Store has been there for 200 years. Perhaps some window boxes?

Bill Stuono - We should reserve our village spaces for affordable housing and amenities.

Frank Tenney - Could some open spaces be altered or changed in some way to make them more connected. Can we be more proactive and plan for the wildlife corridors to be there?

Nate Caress - interested in joining!

5. Administration (Minutes, DRB Review Assignments, Budget)

Motion made to approve February Meeting minutes, seconded and approved!

DRB Review Assignments - It was Claudia and Pete. They will stay on for another month! Motion made, seconded, approved!

Budget - we spent \$50 for [AVCC](#) - we still have \$2472 that we can spend! This money is from the calendars we sold a few years ago! Ideas:

- We need more cameras so we can share them with the public. Next meeting we'll decide how many!
- We could ask for money - the trails committee does this and has a reserve fund - the energy committee has a reserve fund too.
- Maggie K. has made calendars before!
- We could pay for a speaker or pay for Meg Madden so that attending the mushroom walk would be free for residents.

Election of Officers - let's do this in May.

Acknowledgement that this is Roel's last meeting! He has been a valuable member of the CCC for years! You will be missed, Roel! And we may still ask you mapping questions! :)

6. Town Planning and Development Review (PC and DRB Updates, Habitat Map, One Pager)

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Has the DRB suggested an appeal process? Charles Russell will check on that.

Maggie went to one of the Planning Commission meeting. Linda Radimer and Carrie Spear - will be in touch about giving input about trails etc.

The PC is still working on nonconforming structures. They talked about the tower in East Charlotte - someone wants to add antennas.

Maggie Citarella is on the Town Master Planning Steering Committee. There will be a virtual town design workshop on April 10th. Question from Bill - why aren't any village residents on the Steering Committee and who made the questionnaire?

Feedback about the questionnaire can go to Larry or the PC.

Habitat Map: Dave isn't here today. He was working on a scope of work about getting a map made. We'll pick this up next time.

One Pager - The DRB asked us to create a handout to give to applicants. We accepted their edits. But then it got edited again. We decided we didn't want the regulations and statutes on the second page. Staff wanted the second page. We just wanted to point them in the right direction. It's taken a long time! The idea is to let applicants know we're happy to be helpful. The recent email exchange with the town was frustrating.

The page is to let people know how the CCC is involved in the DRC application. The second page is to let people know the statute behind. We just wanted an introduction. Let's talk with Nate.

There have been some sketch applications that have come in late recently. They have not just been given to us late.

7. Outreach (Events, Trails)

Lewis Creek Association event this Thursday the 28th.

Earth Day - Earth Month! 4/27 Ethan Tapper at the library!

Earth Day talk - history of different environmental groups - Monday April 22nd. Hosted by Sustainable Charlotte.

Meg Madden - she said later in June or early July would be best.

Trails - no updates.

Next time - LURs about trails in areas of High Public Value.

Wetland - In the first week of March, there was an excavator digging in the wetland behind town hall. Claudia asked them for the permit. Claudia tried to call the state and could not get a hold of anyone. Aaron said that they were allowed to do some digging without a permit. In the past Maggie K has put in a FOIA request. We could do that!

8. Adjourn (Next Meeting is 4/23)

Motion made to adjourn. Seconded and passed.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Susan Blood.