**BAKERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Unapproved Minutes, Tuesday 4-23 2024, 1 PM**

**167h Meeting**

**Present for a Quorum:** Maura Horne, Alice Foote,Pat Evans, Julie Hill Carolyn Bronz. Guests: Sophie Mazowita, Marlena Valenta

**Intros:** Sophie is a consulting naturalist and wildlife tracker. She is here because she lives locally in Fletcher which does not have a CC, she’s interested in our projects and is here to observe and network and share her expertise.

Marlena is from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) and is here to discuss our plan to apply for a Tree Planting grant.

**Call to Order:** 1:05 pm

**Approve Previous Minutes –** 3-28-24: Motion (AF, MH) to approve, passed.

**Financial Report** – Julie $2,335.13 on hand. Motion (MH, AF) to approve.– passed.

**“Arena” issue:** Pat went up on Belvidere Mtn Rd yesterday and took photos. He had gone up years ago, and now the damage is quite a bit worse. About 2 acres are impacted there, and there’s trash on the ground. There is a flat space at the top of the wetlands up there and people go up with off-highway vehicles (OHV’s) without permission from some of the private landowners. We looked at the map of the area. A third of a mile up is where it becomes a Class 4 road. Nancy Patch came to the Selectboard meeting last evening (4-22) to let the town know about this damage to the wetlands and the stream. As County Forester she can go survey and document areas being damaged. By law people must stay on the right of way and not go on the logging roads, etc. The road has probably migrated from its original position of years ago. A drone video of the area was shown. The OHV activity has changed the stream bed significantly. Dozens of people showed up last night and their concerns were heard in a respectful way; no decisions were taken and this is the start of the conversation about how to address the issue.

**Tree Planting Grant:**

* Marlena will be our point person from NWRPC, which will be the financial agent for the grant. The VT Community and Urban Forestry is administrating this grant and will provide technical support for us. The funds come from ARPA. No match is required. NWRPC will do the application and the reporting.
* The grant is directed at Main Streets in towns, to provide canopy cover, replace old and diseased trees, and create benefit for communities. From $5,000 to $75,000.
* Maura asks: a large portion of the target area along Main Street is private property. How does that work? Marlena: need an agreement with the property owner. Alice: we do have a need for trees in the park, and in the cemetery. School property? Brigham Academy walkway trees are old and some are gone. The empty space next to the Fire Station. 10-12 years ago we did an ash tree survey. The road crew has that.
* Where do the trees come from? FCNRD has tree sales. A 6-7 ft sugar maple is $250. $1500 for a 10-12 ft. Part of eligible costs include 5% for public outreach and input. Sophie’s husband is an arborist. Those kind of services are also covered. Assessing the health of trees also. Fruit/nut trees are a possibility. Adam from VCUF will meet with us either in person or by zoom to further assist us in our application which is due by the end of the year.

**Signage**: Carolyn shared the plans for 2 banners for kiosk, 1 metal sign for Shattuck Mtn. The cost will be $320; that does not include mounting the metal sign. Motion to approve ordering the signs to be made by Mountain View graphics (MH, AF) passed. Discussion about parking for Shattuck Mountain – the parking corral has been moved. May need a “park here” sign also.

**Carriage Barn Update:** Alicesays we could possibly get a small loan from the VT Housing and Conservation Board (town park funders) a $20,000 loan for foundation work or other urgent need. Eric Jessiman, who put up the original turnbuckle, says he will go up in the barn and reattach it. We will hear if we got the Tiny Grant for the barn by early May. Jamie Curtis volunteered his trailer for clean up at the barn. We pay for the dumping fees.

**Town Park: No Mow May:** Carolyn and Phil will put the signs up. The little garage is now filled with the creche items, but they will soon be moved. There are the barrels to deal with.

**Greenup Day:** May 4th. We will do some pollinator garden work on this day also.

**Pollinator Garden:** Sod has been pushed up from plowing, needs to be raked out. Pat will get a couple of barrels of wood chips from behind the school to use on paths.

**Trails Update:** Pat has gone up Shattuck Mountain twice in the last week. The trail is clear where the sugaring is going on. Light clearing is needed on upper sections, removing branches and small fallen trees. We also need to clearly mark the confusing spots where people miss the turns.

**Sights and Sounds of the Season: S**pring beauties, and ramps are out. Maura saw a hepatica. Bloodroot is coming up. Peepers are out, wood frogs already gone. Hermit thrush, trilliums. forsythia. Sophie shared a video of an American bittern. It is a burgeoning, awakening time of year!

**Date for Next Meeting:** Tuesday, May 21 1 pm

**Adjourn 2:45**