

**Conservation Commission Natural Resources Inventory Subcommittee Minutes  
January 03, 2024**

**Members in attendance:** Mary Woodward, Erick Sawtelle, Dawn Genes, Dennis Regan, Don Quigley, Laurel Cox and Caren Rossi.

Meeting called to order by Lisa Murphy at 9:40 am.

There was general consensus that the next meeting should be held on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, E. Sawtelle expressed concern about having a meeting on Valentine's Day.

L. Murphy handed out survey questions she has compiled, she has used the group's prior suggestions in crafting the questions.

D. Genes expressed concern about the proposed "public event" on January 27<sup>th</sup>. D. Genes feels that there is not enough time to publicize the event and feels that attendance will be light, also noting that there are a number of community events like Deliberative Session, Primary Election, etc... in proximity. D. Genes feels the group should move the event date out a little bit.

M. Woodward asks if anyone can clearly explain the advisory committee's purpose?

D. Regan feels the survey needs an introduction that speaks to the purpose of the project and the use of the data gathered.

E. Sawtelle adds that a Zoom meeting might be more effective than an actual event.

M. Woodward asks how committee members are going to actually participate? Will they be involved in mapping?

L. Murphy states that the group needs to gather community priorities and fill in the gap between maps and community desires.

L. Cox emphasizes the importance of community outreach in the process.

D. Regan suggests writing a clear mission statement for the group and the project.

E. Sawtelle expresses unhappiness with the last Master Plan. He feels it was too short and too broad in scope. D. Genes said that the Natural Resources Inventory should feed into the Master Plan.

E. Sawtelle called attention to the second page of the survey questions, specifically item #4; Why is there nothing mentioned about 3<sup>rd</sup> party easement?

L. Murphy advises the group that public input is required as a condition of the grant, this is a grant project so it's important to have public input. She also feels it's important to include young people in the project.

M. Woodward likens the project to a marketing effort stating "The customer, who is the public, has to know what we're selling". M. Woodward stresses the need to include everyone and to be ready for responses you might not be expecting.

A Robertson says that there probably needs to be some educational outreach, a lot of people are not up to speed on the intricacies or conservation and preservation. E. Sawtelle agrees, saying the group needs to educate and as mentioned earlier, let people know why we're gathering information and what we're going to do with it.

L. Cox suggests distributing information at the upcoming elections. D Quigley is not in favor of this.

L. Murphy suggests a mailer, C. Rossi thinks early March would be a good time to mail and provides some mailing data.

M Woodward asks if participants should be asked their age on the survey?

A Robertson says that discussion began regarding a date for the public event, there's been a lot of discussion, but not about a date. C. Rossi suggests some dates, after general discussion it is agreed that the public event will be scheduled for Tuesday March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM on the lower level of the PSC Building.

D. Quigley has 2 suggestions; involve kids, this will help get new people involved in the project, and be aware of private property rights; some residents will be wary of inventorying places on private property. E. Sawtelle agrees that this is a concern. D. Genes suggests emphasizing the greater good and encouraging landowners to take pride in unique resources on their land. E. Sawtelle described game camera concerns in support of D. Quigley's concerns.

L. Murphy advises the group that "it's your plan, you can write it however you'd like". She also suggests a photo contest as a way of generating interest in inventorying natural resources.

L. Murphy would now like to focus on the survey questions. Per the last meeting L. Murphy changed the order of the questions and added "not sure" as a response option.

E. Sawtelle thinks questions should be in alphabetical order so people don't perceive rank or priority.

D. Quigley suggests moving the nature of the questions from "what's important to you" to "what's important for the community" L. Murphy suggests making this an additional, separate question.

E. Sawtelle feels there should be specific mention of rural character, also suggests using the term "Planning for Lee's future".

D. Genes suggests working desirability into a question; "Why do you want to live in Lee? What's important to you and for planning the future of the community?"

D. Regan again mentions that the survey needs an introductory statement to be effective.

D. Genes suggests combining questions #1 and #2 and inquires what the difference is between the two?

D. Quigley suggests using 1 thru 5 for ranking instead of important or not important, E. Sawtelle and D. Genes agree, L. Murphy says she can make this change. D. Regan agrees, thinks that numbers better reflect comparative priorities, he's use the 1 thru 5 response on questions 1, 2 and 3. C. Rossi says it should be used on #4 too.

L. Cox says using the term conservation diminishes the index survey, she recommends eliminating question #4. D. Genes and C. Rossi agree and suggest also eliminating questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11. D. Genes recommends changing question to read "Your favorite outdoor space in Lee".

M. Woodward recommends 2 response columns; one for people to answer as an individual and one for what's best for the community.

L. Murphy thinks the group is getting away from the intent of question #10.

E. Sawtelle says that the inventory is just a snapshot, he recommends adding the phrase "currently" and "in the future" columns to question #1.

L. Murphy recaps discussion noting that questions 1, 2, and 3 should stay on the survey, #10 should be re-worded and the group wants to delete question #11.

D. Genes suggests using the 1-5 ranking response option on question #12, C. Rossi likes this idea. L. Murphy feels it takes away from the intent of the question, D. Genes says that maybe it could be a "Yes" or "No" response option then.

D. Quigley suggests some question wording about the recreation question; "What are you doing now?" and "What do you think is important to plan for?" maybe use the 1-5 ranking response here too.

E. Sawtelle asks why the group is asking survey questions about recreation? How do you tie what recreational activities people prefer to an inventory of natural resources? D. Regan replies that you can use response data to gauge demand which will aid in prioritizing preservation. L. Murphy suggests replacing "outdoor recreation" with "natural resources use", she leave #12 a "yes or no" question and will add question 12-A with a 1-5 ranked response option.

D. Genes inquires about an age question, use a range? Much discussion ensues about which age range to use. It is agreed that the age range response options will be Under 18, 18-35, 35-55, 55-65 and 65+ There will be a notation that everyone in the household is encouraged to take the survey. D. Quigley suggest having 2 surveys; one for children and one for adults.

M. Woodward agrees to work on a uniform introductory statement the board can use on the survey, at the public event and wherever else needed.

L. Murphy advises that she would like to talk about maps before the meeting adjourns and hands out an assortment of inventory maps.

D. Genes says that the Conservation lands map has some mistakes, can the NRI/PREPA budget be used to correct? D. Genes also suggests breaking out 3 conservation map elements; 1) Privately protected properties, 2) Town Conservation properties, 3) UNH owned land. She would also like to see aquifers identified on the water resource map.

E. Sawtelle questions the definition of “farm land soils”

L. Cox points out that Dube Brook should be re-labeled “Oyster River”

D. Genes suggests using Cameron Waite’s flood plain map and also separating forest and ag lands, maybe include forest cover information. D. Quigley advises that given the scale of the maps the group is using forest cover delineation is not an option.

L. Murphy will have Jackson from SRPC attend the next meeting – the maps she handed out are a starting point the group can work from.

L. Cox thinks local soil types should be included on soils map.

A Robertson suggests defining “flood zone” as shown on the water map noting that all property is in a defined flood zone not just property next to the river.

L. Murphy sums up action going forward; M. Woodward will write introduction, A. Robertson can provide publicity, L. Murphy will clean up the survey questions and put together a “what, when, and who” for the group.

11:30 AM meeting adjourns

Minutes compiled by A. Robertson