

## **Minutes**

### **Rural Road Vegetation Assessment Project Committee Meeting**

**August 8, 2017**

Present: Joanne Garton, Jean Vissering (recording), Jeff Cueto, Mark Lane, Jack Pauly, Guthrie Perry

The meeting was called to order at 3:05pm.

#### **Project Overview**

Joanne Garton, Project Director with the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, introduced the Resilient Right-of-Ways Project. The project is funded by the US Forest Service. The goal is to create resilient roadways by managing stormwater runoff, and to improve water quality in rivers and in Lake Champlain. East Montpelier and Calais will serve as pilot towns to help ANR determine guidelines for managing roadside vegetation. As a rural town with primarily gravel roadways, most of the focus will be on managing roadside vegetation. East Montpelier is already working with CVRPC on a \$10,000 grant to create a 20-year plan to address erosion issues on Town Roads.

The project ends in March of 2019. Ms. Garton anticipates a maximum total of four meetings throughout the project.

#### **Town History, Resources and Issues**

There was a brief discussion about previous town efforts to manage roadside vegetation and how tree removals are currently handled. Any trees to be removed within the town r.o.w.s must be reviewed by the town Tree Warden, currently Paul Cate. The process for involving the Tree Warden was discussed. Often landowners become involved in these reviews, sometimes proactively to make note of a dangerous tree, or to protect trees threatened by vehicle damage or removal.

Ms. Garton asked committee members to mark road areas on maps illustrating the following:

- **Known Invasives:** it was noted that buckthorn and Japanese honeysuckle are found throughout, wild chervil in more targeted areas, though it is spreading. The only official town efforts have been in the removal of hogweed from a few areas, but it is an issue of interest to the town.
- **Problem trees:** a large dead tree in East Montpelier Center was noted, also overhanging or leaning trees along some roads such as upper North Street
- **Historic or Valued trees:** several areas in town were noted as having rows of large maples. (I did not mention the huge burr oak on Kelton Road!)
- **Pedestrian Routes:** a number of areas frequented by pedestrians were noted. Some are road loops, others link with town trails.
- **Storm Damage:** falling branches after storms was noted, but no specific areas identified.
- **Scenic vistas:** There are numerous scenic vistas around town. These were noted, and are likely to be identified in the 2018 Town Plan when it is completed in June of next year.
- **Intersections:** balancing sight distances and existing vegetated areas. This is sometimes an issue.
- **Power Companies:** WEC and GMP are the two electric companies serving the town. Trees tend to be managed through regular line clearing, and when damage occurs. Landowners frequently discuss concerns when line clearing occurs.

- Hedgerows: a few were identified, but additional notes are needed.
- Lawns and Agricultural Fields: many fields come right up to the roadside. Some open fields contribute to distant views. Many landowners have trees to provide privacy from public roads.

### **Next Steps**

The committee members suggested studying one or two sections of road that represent a range of conditions. Center Road and North Street were suggested as possible examples. These may serve as examples of the kinds of issues and opportunities that exist in town, and could be used to explore a range of possible management techniques. A field trip in September or October may be scheduled.