



VERMONT URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

Quarterly Council Meeting

September 9th, 2020

Go to Meeting

Minutes

Attending: Richard Amore, Josh Behounek (Davey Tree), Jane Brown, Cecilia Danks, Kate Forrer, Joanne Garton, William Jewell, Steve Handfield, Ann Hazelrigg, Emilie Inoue, Gwen Kozlowski, Lee Krohn, Melissa Levy, Bob McCullough, Sara Packer, Tim Parsons, David Raphael, Elise Schadler, Warren Spinner, Ethan Tapper, Jared Ulmer, Bonnie Waninger

Welcome and Council Business

- **Review/Approve Minutes:** The minutes from the June 10, 2020 council meeting were reviewed and approved (Ann Hazelrigg moved, and Emilie Inoue seconded).

Engaging Our Audiences in COVID times

There are more opportunities than ever before- cornucopia of events! But there is also Zoom fatigue. UCF team looks to balance in engaging audience, but some topics might not be best suited or audiences may not be best fit.

What online learning/webinar/meeting experiences have you had that have been particularly engaging, participatory, or successful?

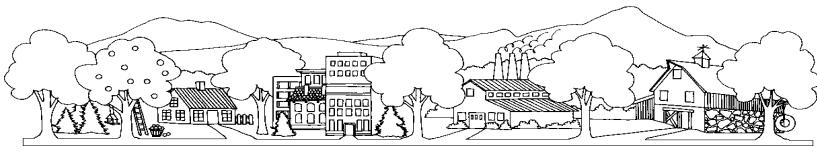
- Ann- has hosted webinars for master gardeners this spring. Format has been 1 hour: 30 minute presentation + 30 minutes questions to keep audience engaged. These have focused on pest issues. Is there an opportunity to connect with tree wardens? Noon webinars or happy hour have both worked well.
- Warren- suggested building upon tree warden meeting last October and perhaps hosting a meet/greet and session on about issues tree wardens are dealing with. Pest might be topic of focus.

Branch out Burlington has hosted tree walks and doing outdoor programming in small groups. Pruning workshops might be an option.

- Celia- noon webinars used to work, but is now harder with so many web meetings. Ethan Tapper's Youtube channel has been helpful. Suggested shorter content (6-15 minutes) and ensure they are well indexed.
- Sara- CEO has developed videos to stay in communication with employees- interactive, brief, subject

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matter to share. CEO identifies someone in the company as a subject matter expert and interviews them. They are fun to watch and effective in communicating intended content. Manager meeting uses breakout sessions and do smaller groups and come back together. Makes it more manageable.

- Richard- VT Council of Rural Development. Convening leaders have been successful events. They are regional, specific, have a strong moderator to kick off. ACCD has also seen larger webinar participation this spring (May-June). Facebook live happy hours have also been successful events. They are moderated and engage folks with chat, etc. This is a way to pull in experts in the field nationally.
- Ethan- webinars have hit/miss with attendance and he is hoping for higher participation in the fall. Suggests looking for unusual partnerships to broaden our reach extend audience. Archived material is helpful to direct folks to in the future. Avenza is a free app to create self guided tours. May be useful tool to create urban forest/tree ID tours.
- Tim- Middlebury College Staff Council President, has hosted town halls with 500+ participants at once using the webinar feature (zoom). Q&A box- make it interactive so they don't need camera/mic. Questions can be "up voted" and it will rise to the top, so most relevant question rise to the top.
- David- Suggested coordinating an online event with a small scale in-person component, perhaps tree wardens? RPC could be great partners and focus topics on regional issues that are particularly relevant.
- Bonnie- suggests format to be small to get better conversations, one on one interactions.

Legislative Letter from Council

Idea of legislative letter is to get UCF program in front of the legislature and highlight the important work completed. In 2018, the council created cover letter and brochure to highlight work. *Council members will draft a letter for review at December meeting.*

- There are extra hardcopy brochures leftover from 2018.
- UCF can update document and include online version. There are no funds to re-print.
- Suggested items to focus on include:
 - Spotlight on access to Green Space- key tool for economic recovery.
 - RROW & Forest for the People projects wrapping up.
 - Keep it simple & target message!

If there is a specific ask, opportunity to move legislation forward, a letter should be target to a committee with relevant message. Additionally, letters from multiple partners makes for a stronger case. Partners and who signs the letter makes a strong impact as well.

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Other ideas include re-visiting hosting events at state house, like Arbor Day in the past or highlight groups like tree wardens for more visibility.

Update UCF Strategic Action Plan

VT UCF is due for an update of our Urban & Community Forestry Action Plan. This plan guides the direction of our programming, UCF staff uses it to report activities quarterly, and we assess progress and gaps at our annual staff planning meeting.

- The 5 Desired Future Conditions in this plan are identified in the State of Vermont Forest Action Plan (these will not change).
- The Strategies in this plan were identified by UCF Council and staff in 2015, the last time we engaged in this action planning process.

The goal of this activity is to determine if each of the strategies should be carried over to the 2021-2026 Urban & Community Forestry Action Plan and if any new strategies should be added.

Council started the process of updating *Desired Future Condition 2: Forest Health and Productivity*. Council members will self-select one of the remaining DFCs to update strategies. Each group will be facilitated by a UCF staff member and will meet before the December Council meetings. *Groups will report back at the December meeting.*

DFC 1: Biological Diversity: **Kate Forrer, Melissa Levy, Bob McCullough, Richard Amore, Cecilia Danks**

DFC 2: Forest Health & Productivity: **Elise Schadler, Ethan Tapper, Lee Krohn, Dave Schneider/Tim Smith**

DFC 3: Forest Products & Ecosystem Services: **Joanne Garton, Steve Handfield, Sara Packer, David Rafael, Jared Ulmer, Jane Brown**

DFC 4: Land Ethic: **Gwen Kozlowski, Nick Meyer, Mike Fallis, Warren Spinner, Tim Parsons, Ann Hazelrigg**

DFC 5: Legal, Institutional, & Economic Framework: **Elise Schadler, Emilie Inoue, Bill Jewell, Bonnie Waninger**

Program Conversation

- FPR Updates
 - Tree Wardens- passed by house in March 2020. Next, the Senate committee on Natural Resources and Energy would need to pick up the bill. Council members and volunteers are calling senators on committee to voice their support of the bill. If does not get picked up, the bill will not move forward and it would not be a priority for the next legislative session.
 - Act 250- changes will allow for greater exceptions for trails
 - Forest Economy Stabilization Grants- \$5 million from CARES to support forest products industry. Currently there 68 applications approved and payment in process, for a total of 3.5 million- 75% of total funds. 12 more applications are in process.
 - Great Outdoors Act- \$900 million, funds in part the Forest Legacy Program so there will likely

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VT Urban & Community Forestry Program

1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620-3801

Elise Schadler, Program Manager
802-522-6015
elise.schadler@vermont.gov
vtcommunityforestry.org

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- more forest acquisition in VT!
- UVA files are getting digitized.
- Grants:
 - 2020 EAB management grant projects- 3 communities are moving forward as planned
 - 2021 Ash Tree Management Grants open, seeking proposals due 10/30, \$50,000 available
 - Volunteers to review: Nick Meyer, Emilie Inoue
- USFS Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Proposal: Women Owning Woodlands network- Kate is leading application process. Goal: Empowering women landowners to confident, skilled stewards of their forests.
- EAB Awareness Week: September 12th–19th
- 2020 Community Canopy free tree giveaways in Brattleboro and Bradford on Sept. 19th
- Preview of Resilient Right-of-Ways Guide- culmination of 5 year LSR grant

Meeting Adjourned

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