

Meeting Minutes
Delaware Native Species Commission
February 19, 2020 at 10 am
Kent County Administrative Building, 555 Bay Road, Dover, Delaware
Room 220

Minutes approved on: April 15, 2020

Members Present

James White, Chair
Lori Athey
Susan Barton
Valann Budischak
Darin Callaway
Sarah Cooksey
Jeffery Downing

Jessica Inhof
Ashley Kennedy
Matthew Sarver (via phone)
David Saveikis
Tracy Surles (via phone)
Janice Truitt

Members Absent

Robert Thornton, Vice-Chair
Michael Costello
Christopher Heckscher
Katherine Holtz
James McCulley
Michael Petit de Mange

Administrative Staff

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III

Public Present

Senator Stephanie Hansen
Linda Newsome
Jeff Brothers
Bill McAvoy
Sheila Smith
Gretchen Klein
Flavia Rutkosky
Steve Cottrell

Call to Order

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting. Dr. Kennedy requested that “Ms.” be replaced with “Dr.” in occurrence with her name. Mr. Saveikis noted the motion made by Dr. Barton concerning the species listed on the invasive plants ban bill was not clear and requested permission to edit it. Dr. Barton approved. Mr. McAvoy, member of the

public, had concerns about what species were added to the bill and what were left out. Ms. Cooksey noted her name was misspelled in one instance and there were a few more minor edits to correct typos. However, there was not a quorum of eligible commission members that had attended the December meeting to approve the meeting minutes, so no motion was made or approved.

Unfinished Business

Summit Update (formally known as symposium)

The summit is set for March 24, 2020 and registration is open. Mr. Downing encouraged everyone to share the invitation flyer. Ms. Cooksey asked where things stand with the budget and Mr. Downing replied that they are within the \$20,000 range approved at the December meeting.

There was discussion about sponsorships for the summit and for the Commission in general and how best to manage them. If the Commission used sponsorship money for the summit, the Grant-in-Aid money given by the General Assembly would not be spent and that money runs out on June 20, 2020 with no roll-over into the next fiscal year. Senator Hansen noted that no money was requested for the upcoming fiscal year budget.

General consensus was to use the Grant-in-Aid money first and keep sponsorship money for other needs. The best course of action is to make clear to the public what purposes their donations are going towards. Mr. Downing talked about having different levels of sponsorship for the public to choose from. Mr. Sarver asked if there was a sponsorship option on the summit's website and Mr. Downing replied that he was waiting until discussion at this meeting to add it, which he will now do. All monetary donations should come to DNREC and DNREC will administer funds as needed.

Legislation

Senator Hansen informed the Commission that SB207 has passed the Senate and was moving to the House. She saw no reasons why the bill would not pass the house also and the Commission discussed where a signing ceremony could be held. Possible locations include a nursery, plant retailer or a wildlife area. Dr. Barton discussed how a large public media event could really help the bill be understood by the public.

Mr. McAvoy noted that the species list in the bill was not consistent with the Delaware Invasive Species Council's list. Mr. White noted that the list for the bill can be modified and species can be added to a Watch List maintained by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Reed Canary Grass was removed from the list on the bill and those agencies that have reed canary grass fields will work to find alternatives.

Subcommittee Guidelines

Senator Hansen shared a document created by another task force she chairs that has several large subcommittees. The document outlines the process for holding subcommittee meetings so as to follow the state laws regarding public meetings. The Senator thought the Commission could adopt the guidelines for their use. The Commission agreed and Mr. Saveikis stated he would edit the document so that the information was applicable to the Commission and DNREC staff that provide the administrative support of the Commission.

How to address Frenchtown Woods request and similar inquiries

The Commission has received several requests for help or support from the public since being created, Frenchtown Woods being the latest. The Commission discussed how much involvement they should or could have in the development process and what support would look like, whether it would be a letter written to regulatory groups, developers and so on or would it be monetary support to preservation groups. The Commission should decide what role they would play as matters concerning native species arose. As the Commission has no policy or procedure in place for responding to these requests, it was determined that a subcommittee should be formed to create a way to best manage requests. Ms. Athey noted that the Commission was not set up to get involved in development but to be involved with legislation and funding at a higher level. Dr. Barton countered that it could be in the realm of the Commission to offer expertise to groups, by perhaps doing site visits and then commenting. Mr. Saveikis informed the Commission that the Division of Fish & Wildlife has staff that do environmental reviews on areas that are focused on the habitat and species and Senator Hansen mentioned that the State Planning website has environmental reports available. Mr. Sarver noted that the public may not know where to find these reports. Mr. White mentioned that it might be best to express the facts and reasons why to protect an area without noting opposition or support. Dr. Kennedy, Ms. Cooksey and Mr. White volunteered to be on the subcommittee and Mr. White will talk with some of the people who were not in attendance about joining. Ms. Athey suggested that at least one member representing a government entity be on the subcommittee and Mr. Saveikis will appoint an environmental review staff person to join. The subcommittee will form and meet after the Summit is completed.

Commission Logo review

Mr. Downing presented three options that Mt. Cuba's graphic team designed for the Commission to review. The option the Commission decided upon contained a representation of the paw paw plant and a butterfly to the left of the slogan with the Commission name underneath. After discussing the need for accuracy, it was decided that better imagery was needed. Mr. Downing noted that Mt. Cuba's graphic design team had exhausted their pro bono work, so Mr. Saveikis volunteered his staff to continue the refinement of the logo. Mr. McAvoy would submit to Ms. Childers photographs of the paw paw plant; Mr. White would submit imagery of a zebra butterfly and Mr. Downing would submit the graphic files. As the Commission wants to logo ready for the March 24th summit, Dr. Kennedy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Saveikis to allow Mr. White to make the final decision on the logo. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Law and Regulations Subcommittee Report

Mr. Petit De Mange was not in attendance. There was no report.

Education Subcommittee Report

Mr. Downing reported that the subcommittee was nearing completion of their tabletop display and working on their goals, which include creating a website for the Commission.

Other Business

Top Ten Tasks

No updates at this meeting.

Goals for 2020

No updates at this meeting.

Ms. Childears discussed an invitation from the Division of Watershed Stewardship to their annual Water Family Fest on Saturday June 13, 2020. The Commission is invited to exhibit at this event. Ms. Childears shared the invite via email before the meeting and provided a hard copy of the flyer to Mr. Downing at the meeting for discussion in the Education Subcommittee.

Ms. Cooksey asked Mr. Saveikis if DNREC had requested any funding for the DNSC from the Joint Finance Committee. Mr. Saveikis indicated they had not.

Public Comment

Ms. Smith suggested the Commission members create an email list from the Summit registrants. She also suggested emailing the invitation to member's groups and invite the local governments and keep talking with them about this.

Ms. Klein urged to Commission to look into changing laws as the rule of law has power. Sussex County developers are over taking the county and foliage is being lost. Ms. Klein felt that a law would go much further than a letter of support. She also mentioned she had been to the Office of State Planning Coordination's Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) webpage and found it impressive. Finally, Ms. Klein asked the Commission to include tribal people in land discussions.

Ms. Truitt asked if there was a way to provide the public with a list of invasive plants and alternatives that also had photographs of the plants. This would be a great tool in educating the public and would be nice to have at the Summit. Ms. Rutkosky mentioned she could send copies of what the USFWS National Parks published in their pamphlet of Invasive Plants of the Northeast.

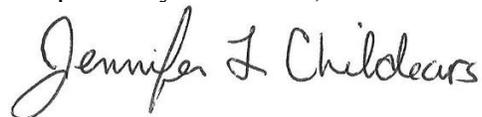
Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2020, in Room 220 at 10:00 am.

Adjournment

There being no further business or time, the meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III
DNREC, Division of Fish & Wildlife