

Meeting Minutes
Delaware Native Species Commission
April 15, 2020 at 10 am
Virtual Meeting- Video Conference through WebEx

Minutes approved on: June 17, 2020

Members Present

James White, Chair
Lori Athey
Susan Barton
Valann Budischak
Darin Callaway
Sarah Cooksey
Michael Costello
Jeffery Downing
Christopher Heckscher
Katherine Holtz

Jessica Inhof
Ashley Kennedy
James McCulley
Michael Petit de Mange
Matthew Sarver
Tracy Surles

Members Absent

David Saveikis
Robert Thornton, Vice-Chair
Janice Truitt

Administrative Staff

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III

Public Present

Senator Stephanie Hansen
Bill McAvoy
Sheila Smith
Steve Cottrell
James Coulson
Karen Wilkens
Steven Dietrich
Rick Mickowski
Helen Fischel
Dee Duhram
Bernie August
Wini Walton

Call to Order

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting. All eligible commission members approved the minutes. This being the first order of business in the first virtual meeting of the commission, the motion to approve was overlooked.

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting. Ms. Athey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Petit de Mange to accept the minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously by commission members present at that meeting.

Unfinished Business

Legislation

Senator Hansen informed the Commission that SB207 has passed the Senate and was moving to the House. It has not gone through the house committee and with the current shutdown due to the global pandemic, Senator Hansen was not sure what bills would be passed through. The General Assembly has to meet to vote on the state budget so it's possible that smaller, non-controversial bills could be voted on also during this time. Senator Hansen will keep pushing for it to be voted on this session.

New Business

Summit Reschedule

Due to the global pandemic of Coronavirus 19, the Summit scheduled for March 24th had to be cancelled. Mr. Downing reported that they will regroup and start over, looking at a date in the fall. Mr. White pointed out that the foundation has been created so things might go forward easier. Ms. Cooksey asked about the budget. As Mr. Saveikis was absent from the meeting, Ms. Childears relayed information pertaining to the budget of the Commission. The Commission was awarded Grant-in-Aid money from the general assembly for the fiscal year that runs July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Grant-in-Aid money does not follow through fiscal years so if the money is not spent by June 30, 2020, it is lost. However, because of the unique circumstance that occurred (coronavirus 19, global pandemic), Mr. Saveikis was researching if the money could be moved to the new fiscal year as an exception. Senator Hansen requested to be looped in on the research to help follow up. If the money does not go through to the next fiscal year, the Commission will need to find another way to fund the Summit.

Formation of Request for Support Subcommittee

The Commission receives requests for support from various stakeholders. It was decided that at the February meeting that a subcommittee be formed to review requests. Mr. White will set up the first meeting of the subcommittee. Members of the committee will include Ms. Cooksey, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Heckscher, Ms. Surles, Mr. McAvoy and a DNREC staff member to be named later.

Law and Regulations Subcommittee Report

Mr. Petit de Mange experienced audio issues during the meeting and was unable to communicate with the commission. However, he was able to convey that a meeting of the subcommittee has not occurred but the goal of developing a Model Ordinance for local governments that would establish a template for native plant and invasives land use regulations for inclusion in land development codes is still being pursued.

Education Subcommittee Report

Mr. Downing reviewed the subcommittee's goals and thoughts on what to do moving forward.

Other Business

Top Ten Tasks

No updates for this meeting.

Goals for 2020

No updates for this meeting.

Mr. White opened a discussion about pesticide certification which was brought to his attention by Mr. Cottrell. There is an opinion that the certification program does not mention invasive plant protocols and that it is hard to find information on how to remove invasive while leaving non-invasives in place. Mr. Cottrell would like the commission to look into ways to make the program better. Ms. Inhof noted that the Department of Agriculture has programs and plans in place to address this.

Ms. Inhof mentioned that April is Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month and she would send a link to the USDA site that has planned some education sites in regard to this topic.

Mr. Cottrell again led the discussion back to pesticide certification and the need for in-depth training on invasive control. Ms. Budischak noted that training manuals were currently being reviewed and updated. Mr. Sarver also agreed that the training need review as some aspects of the training were confusing. Discussions covered landscape architects, landscapers and general lawn maintenance businesses and the differences between each type. The overall themes were that more education was needed; there should be a push to involve homeowner associations; and there needs to be a tie in between native plants and the wildlife aspect- what native wildlife are drawn in by which native plant species.

Ms. Smith mentioned that #16 on the Commission's recommendations address this topic and perhaps it should be moved into the Top Ten list (The educational material should be distributed to homeowner associations and property management associations. This will not only inform those organizations, but this should be encouraged as one method of subsequent distribution to the individual homeowners).

Public Comment

Senator Hansen showed the Commission the updated pollinator plate that is currently going through legislation. The money raised will go to DeIDOT to help provide pollinator habitat along roadways.

Mr. Mikkelsen noted that the Delaware Native Plant Society has updated their publication, Delaware Native Plants for Landscaping and Restoration, and it is available for \$5.00

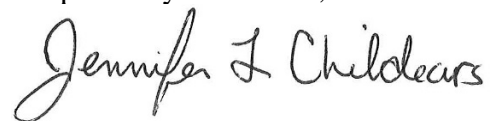
Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2020 in Room 220 at 10:00 am, unless otherwise noticed.

Adjournment

There being no further business or time, the meeting adjourned at 11:03 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer I. Childears". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

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