

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 2/22/24 at 7:00 P.M, via Zoom

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm. Present: Tatiana Schreiber, Rachael Shaw, Kathy Kingston, Kestrel Craig, Sarah Waldo
2. Adjustments to Agenda: add Schedule ephemeral program to new business
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 1/4/24 – Kathy moved that we accept the minutes. Kestrel seconded. Minutes approved by unanimous consent.
4. Communications and Public Comment:
 - a. Tatiana received communication from Mary Sherbatscoy re: Water in Westminster event. See part 6a.
 - b. Tatiana attended a Standing Trees talk, about the value of our mature forests for carbon sequestration. There are two more lectures scheduled. Tatiana will send links.
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –
 - a) Beaver Working Group/BEEC program –BWG met with the Selectboard. They have decided not to proceed with a flow device on Henwood Hill Road. BWG has planned a forum at 3pm on March 24 at the Westminster West Church with many interested parties including Patti Smith, Skip Lisle, Denise Burchsted, Chuck Lawrence, etc.
 - b) Continue comments on Natural Resources section of TP - Rachael and Tatiana will schedule another session to finish making comments.
 - c) Winter tracking event - We had a successful program with 10 participants, although the tracking was not great. Martha Mitchell provided hand-outs and a lot of good information, and we were able to explore part of the Westminster West wetland in the village and some forested land near the WW School.
 - d) Other programs/projects – follow up - 15
 1. wildlife corridors- Kathy has the contact info, will follow up with Ann Kerry.
 2. riparian buffer project- Tatiana spoke with Cory Ross, there are several grants available to support these projects such as the Trees for Streams program. . The Windham County Conservation District could do the grant application. We could choose a site for next fall, they would evaluate any project and decide if they would support it. If so, they

would help us write the grant and acquire the plants. Buffers of 35-50 feet wide are usually best, and an acre or is a typical size, but they will do smaller plots if warranted by ecological value.. Public or private land as long as the District feels it's an important place. Tatiana will speak with someone at Sevca to see if there is a good spot to plant a riparian buffer there. Everyone else will explore other possible sites.

3. biodiversity inventories- Guilford's project is remarkable. Certainly a worthwhile project and would require extensive time and funding. Postpone discussion.
- e) Church planting update- Selectboard will support up to \$500. Tatiana and Kathy have placed orders with Fedco and the NRCD plant sale Kathy will email her invoice to Tatiana and Tatiana will submit to the Town. We will purchase additional bare root elderberries from Gino Palmeri.
- f) Act 59, Vermont Conservation strategies. ANR initiative 30/30, 50/50. - postponed discussion
- g) VCRD community visioning -Town manager is following up with this.
- h) Town Forest management -postponed discussion

6. New Business:

- a) Water in Westminster event Tuesday March 12 at 7 pm at the WW Library. Tatiana will email the survey that has been distributed to WW village residents to WCC members. David Major is moderating the event. Denise Burchsted will do a short presentation. Tatiana has been asked to facilitate the community conversation portion of the event.
- b) Planning Commission status – Seroya Crouch, Richard Crocker and Kathy Kingston wrote a letter to the Selectboard with some suggestions: do a community visioning project like Putney did; vet new members with an interview process. The town is currently attempting to recruit 5 members for the Planning Commission.
- c) Conservation Commissions surveys
 - i. AVCC (Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions) survey – Tatiana will complete the survey which asks about our Conservation Commission funding, how many members, budget, oversight of town forest questions, does the WCC have jurisdiction over any natural areas. Tatiana will contact the Town Manager to confirm information about the town forest.
 - a. tiny grants, \$250-\$600 deadline April 5th. We would have to be a member of the AVCC organization (\$50 annually) Kathy made a motion for Tatiana to ask the Selectboard for the \$50 to be a member. Sarah seconded.

The motion passed unanimously. Add a WCC budget request to the agenda for next year.

ii. Outdoor recreation survey-Survey from Margo Ghia (Dept of Forest Parks and Recreation project), vision for priorities for outdoor recreation for the next 5 years. Tatiana will forward the survey to all of us. We can respond individually.

- d) Blake and Higgins dam CT River Conservancy partnership - part of a Statewide effort to remove old dams and restore waterways. We have been asked to be a partner on this project. We will take an official vote on this at our next meeting. For questions, email Ron Rhodes (rrhodes@ctriver.org)
- e) Add in Schedule Ephemeral program - postponed
- 8. Date of Next Meeting: March 28th 7 PM- in person?
- 9. Adjournment at 8:50 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Rachael Shaw, secretary