

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 5/23/24 at 7:00 P.M
Westminster Institute
3534 US Route 5

1. Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm. Present: Tatiana Schreiber (chair), Kestrel Craig, Rachael Shaw (secretary), Jim Calchera
2. Adjustments to Agenda—Add report back from the ephemeral walk to unfinished business.
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 4/25/24 –Minutes read, and Kestrel moved to accept the minutes with a change (N. Westminster Community House, not N. Westminster Community Center). Tatiana seconded. Minutes approved by unanimous consent.
4. Communications and Public Comment:
 - a) Comments from potential new member Jim Calchera- Jim has lived in Westminster for 33 years with his wife, would like to bring alternate perspectives to the Commission, is on Connecticut River Joint Commission which reviews potential construction projects that border/ impact the Connecticut, and provides comments. (They are looking for new members, he mentioned.). Jim has already submitted a letter of interest to the Selectboard and is interested in contributing to the WCC. It came to our attention that the Beaver Working Group had been perceived by Jim as a subgroup of the WCC, when it's actually a separate entity which has membership overlap.
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –
 - a) Beaver Working Group/BEEC program update – there is a plan to install a beaver deceiver just upstream (north) from the Wright Way culvert.
 - b) Green Up Day, report -This is the first year that the WCC has coordinated. It was a very successful green-up day from all observations. The town reports that they picked up 190 bags of trash, and 80 tires. Thank you to everyone who got out there and picked up trash!
 - c.) Ephemeral Walk - A very enjoyable and satisfying ephemeral walk happened Sunday afternoon, April 28. We had perfect weather of sunshine and almost 70 degrees. The Cooper Ellis family kindly gave permission for us to explore the Hidden Springs trails. We were fortunate to view many wildflowers in peak bloom, including toothwort, trout lily, spring beauties, Dutchman's breeches, squirrel corn, herb Robert, foam flower, bellwort (also known as wild oats), hepatica, red trillium, yellow (round-leaved) and blue violets, seersucker sedge, and many varieties of ferns beginning to unfurl. Several new Westminster residents joined all the members of our Commission for a very pleasant two hour walk. Rachael will write an article on the Ephemeral Walk, the planting project and mention green-up day in an article entitled "News from the Conservation Commission" for the July Gazette (published in late June).
 - d) Natural Resources section of Town Plan – schedule work meeting -postpone until we communicate with the planning commission to determine which draft we should be commenting on.

e) Other programs/projects – follow up

1. riparian buffer project— For this project, Cory Ross from Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District will raise the funds and purchase the plants. Tatiana and Sarah met with Vic Baisley at Sevca. It was difficult to determine whether or not this was a good site. Sarah will be seeing Cory Ross at a Putney event tonight and will ask about some dates where he could visit the Sevca site. We should brainstorm some other possible sites. Kestrel is interested in joining the site visit with Ross.

f) Church planting update/create watering schedule - everything has been planted except the 4 elderberries, which will be ready after Memorial Day. We will plant the elderberries on Sunday, June 9 at 9:30 am. Tatiana will send out a sign up form for watering once a week. Tatiana will coordinate with Gino Palmeri to pick up the plants.

g) ANR initiative – postpone discussion. We will all watch the video that Tatiana forwarded.

h) Town Forest management/planning June 17 10 am. Walk. Meet at the WW School at 9:45 and carpool over– still trying to clarify the exact number/size/maps of the Forest.

6. New Business:

a) Budget for Conservation Commission – Currently we don't have an official budget; we can make requests to the Town as projects come up. Sarah suggested a request of \$1500, for which we would develop a specific budget. Some of these funds could go toward trail building/ kiosk supplies in the Town Forest, some for event refreshments, \$50 for annual membership in the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions. Sarah willing to present our budget to the Selectboard, and we would all be there to support it at a meeting where it would be voted on. We may also need to explain our budget request at Town Meeting. Tatiana will contact Alex of the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions to find out the results of their survey which included information about the budgets that different Commissions have. Kestrel will follow up with a couple of the CCs to ask about how they use their budgets.

b) Putney Conservation Commission birding event 5/25 at 7:30 am

c) Sending representative to PCC and RCC meetings -Jim would be willing to attend one or two of Putney's. Kestrel would be willing to attend one of Rockingham's. Tatiana will assign someone to read the minutes and report (Kestrel- Rockingham), and will contact someone from Putney to get their minutes.

7. Other Business: none

8. Date of Next Meeting: June 27th, Location (WW Village Library)

9. Adjournment. Tatiana moved we adjourn. Kestrel seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Rachael Shaw, secretary