

## WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 10/24/24 at 7:00 P.M

In person, Westminster Institute

Or, for Zoom link, contact: [westminstervtconservation@gmail.com](mailto:westminstervtconservation@gmail.com)

1. Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 7:10. Present: Tatiana Schreiber, Rachael Shaw, Kestrel Craig, and Jim Calchera (Jim via Zoom).
2. Adjustments to Agenda :no adjustments
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 8/26/24 – Minutes read and accepted by unanimous consent.
4. Communications and Public Comment:
  - a. We reviewed some of the emails our gmail account had received over the past month. We often get invitations to webinars and programs.
  - b. There are several programs upcoming on wildlife connectivity sponsored by the VTF&W Community Wildlife Program fall webinar series. For more information check out the email from David Moroney dated October 18. Recordings of the webinars are also often available.
  - c. Peter Bergstrom of the RCC sent our gmail account an email asking if we had visited the site. Blake and Higgins Dam was removed, and the VFW is very concerned that the Basin Farm more recently made some major alterations to river flow without permits. Kathy Urffer, River Steward from the Connecticut River Conservancy has reached out to many agencies and a case has been opened. We learned via the email thread that Sarah will try to visit the site tomorrow. Kestrel and Jim will coordinate to visit the site together.
  - d. On Nov 1 -2024 Municipal Day is happening in Montpelier, a day long event, sponsored by the VT Agency of Natural Resources. There are 28 different workshops.
  - e. We are now successfully subscribed to the AVCC (Assoc. of Vermont Conservation Commissions) list-serve.
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –

a) Church Planting maintenance –Rachael will check the plants and water if needed. If needed, Jim will follow up with watering.

b) Town Plan - Tatiana will send Lachlan Francis the chapter on Natural Resources that we had made comments on.

c) Other programs/projects – follow up – 15

1. riparian buffer project- no new information, Kestrel will follow up with Cory Ross and Vic Baisley to ask if there is any new info. We need to move forward if we're going to do a project that requires submission of a proposal.

2. Biodiversity Inventory- As Sarah has resigned, Tatiana will follow up with Guilford on how they got their funding.

3. Town forest planning - We planned a Town Forest CC walk for Saturday Dec 21 10-12am. Jim will try to get out there and look for boundary markers before this date, and will let other members know in case anyone can join him.

d) Budget for conservation commission – Tatiana reached out to the AVCC list serve with general questions about CC budgets with respect to advisory status of Conservation Commissions and revisions to Open Meeting Law. Many members responded, and the consensus seems to be that while many Commissions receive annual budgets from their towns, they also submit invoices and receive SB approval for expenses. They are still advisory committees and therefore not required to record meetings.

Tatiana also had an email exchange with Town Manager Lou Bordeaux re: budget submitting protocol and expectations.

Having reviewed this information, all four WCC members were in favor of submitting a budget. Tatiana made a motion to submit a budget totaling \$750 to the Town Manager for inclusion in the budget next year. Kestrel seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed. Tatiana will submit the budget to Lou which includes the line items we discussed by Oct 28 and the information from the other CCs.

e) Westminster watershed discussion - Rachael submitted an article called “Watersheds and Waterways of Westminster” to the

Gazette for the November issue. This is intended to be the first of a short series of articles.

6. New Business:

a) CC member resignation/recruitment - Sarah Waldo has officially resigned from the Commission. We had a brief discussion on the current status of the WCC. We will make efforts to recruit at least two energetic new members for our commission. We will discuss recruitment methods further at the next meeting.

7. Other Business: Kestrel made a motion to form a subcommittee of Tatiana and Rachael to create a report on the CC for the Town Report. Tatiana seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rachael will find out when it's due. Recruitment can be mentioned in the report.

8. Date of Next Meeting: December 5 at the Westminster West Library. Rachael will let Jim Matteau know that our next meeting at the Institute will be on Thursday Jan 23.

9. Adjournment at 8:15 pm  
Minutes submitted respectfully by  
Rachael Shaw, secretary