

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes

Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 7:15 P.M.

Westminster Institute

Present: Tatiana Schreiber(chair), Rachael Shaw(secretary), Naomi Craig, Doug Oftedahl

1. Call to Order 7:20 p.m.
2. Adjustments to Agenda
 - Add a discussion of current Westminster West beaver situation.
 - Delete reading and acceptance of minutes due to no quorum
3. Acceptance of Minutes: Minutes from March 28 (postponed until next meeting)
4. Communications and Public Comment: none
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action)
 - a.) Watershed grant – finish tasks – copying/dissemination of report; plan meeting for map interpretation

Tatiana reports that 6 bound copies of the report were made. They've been distributed to the Town Hall, Planning Commission, Butterfield Library, and Westminster West Library. We will give one to the Select Board, and keep one. PDF's of the report were sent to Rebecca Chalmers (local Fish and Wildlife department official), and to the Selectboard members (by Kelley Thayer). Several attendees of the final grant report presentation signed up to request PDF's of the report. Tatiana will send these out.

The remaining \$145 of the grant funds will be used to make some cheaper copies of the report (approximately 15-20) which will be available to share at libraries and with people who are interested in having a hard copy.

Andy Toepfer sent some helpful information to Libby Mills by email. It would still be helpful to hold a meeting with Andy Toepfer, Rebecca Chalmers, a geomorphologist, and/or hydrologist if possible. We could ask if Jeff Nugent would be willing to come. Get a sense of which dates could work for this meeting.

b) Begin discussion of preferred strategies for invasive species control.

In Brattleboro they are using a manual control strategy (frequent cutting, up to 12 times per year (every 2-3 weeks during the growing season, for a couple years) on knotweed. This is similar to the Mike Bald strategy. Brattleboro Conservation Commission made a short 3 part video on their techniques.

Tatiana mentioned that the WCC could produce some guidelines for dealing with invasives/opportunistic plants. Naomi will get recommendations from the ethnobotanist that she knows. Tatiana will send us the the report that she got from Margo Ghia.

c) Town Plan recommendations – discuss plan for work going forward and assign tasks 10 min

The Planning Commission meets on the second Monday of the month at 7 pm, if any of our WCC members are able to attend these meetings.

Doug mentioned that the Planning Commission could use our input by the end of this year, so we need to all re-read our sections and come to the next meeting with some suggested input.

Rachael - Wetlands and Fish and Wildlife

Tatiana - Agricultural and Forest Lands

Stephen - Energy use

Michael Daley - read Energy section

Arthur Chap 17,

All - Chap 18

Naomi will get a copy of the Town Plan and decide which sections she would like to review.

d) Follow up if needed on

* herbicide use - postponed.

*tree warden position - Stephen had sent an email out that Mark Lund would like to continue as tree warden.

e) Town Forest trail work and related. Postponed discussion.

6. New Business (Discussion / Action)

a) Report from regional Conservation Commission meeting that Guilford hosted on April 17, 2019, Tatiana attended. 12-14 different CCs attended. Presentation on Emerald Ash Borer and strategies towns could use to prepare.

Fish and Wildlife will hold free tech assistance and workshops for all towns, such as how to use VT Bio finder.

Act 171 The Forest Integrity Bill - new language (John Bennett, WRC) required in Town Plans.

The Hogback Mountain CC created a bio diversity inventory.

Guilford CC member would be willing to come to our meeting to share lessons learned from their recent process in trying to put forward new flood resilience ordinance.

Margo Ghia (Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District) is going to put out a twice monthly e-newsletter for Conservation Commissions.

7. Other Business:

Discussion of beaver situation in West West. Rachael mentioned that there is currently a beaver conflict issue at the culvert across from the Westminster West School. Ideally these beavers could be removed by a no-kill means, if they need to be removed. Russ Hodgkins will be in contact with the State to see if they will stand by the deceiver that they built 6 years ago.

8. Date of Next Meeting: May 23rd, 2019 7:15 pm

9. Adjournment 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Rachael Shaw, secretary