

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 7:15 P.M.

Location: Westminster Institute

Present: Tatiana Schreiber (chair), Rachael Shaw (secretary), Stephen Major, Naomi Craig.

Guests: Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman), Ben Masure, Jason Benson (Westminster Road Crew)

Note: This meeting's agenda was not warned in time, so no official business can take place.

1. Call to Order 7:15 pm

2. Adjustments to Agenda

Ash tree Inventory app report from Naomi, add to Unfinished Business.

3. Acceptance of Minutes: Minutes from Dec 5 and Jan 30 Read minutes from Jan 30.

Delayed acceptance vote due to above note.

4. Communications and Public Comment: none

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) -

a) Invasive species brochure – discuss progress

Naomi, Arthur, Tatiana and Rachael met on February 15, 2020 at the WW Library for a work session on brochure google doc. It will not be completed in time to print for Town Meeting so we decided to postpone booklet printing. New deadline – March 30.

Next work session – Sat, March 21 – 2:30 -4:30 pm at Westminster West Library assign tasks

Review budget – write budget request to town, \$250 for 125 copies, work on letter during work session.

b) Town Plan recommendations – review progress on assigned sections (Delayed discussion)
share google doc, assign tasks

c) Review plans for educational events: (Delayed, lack of time)

1. Spring beaver deceiver educational event

(Note 3/6/20: Mike Ghia of Rockingham CC has offered to possibly co-sponsor this event with us, and noted that the Pleasant Valley Road beaver deceiver installation near the Saxtons River Rec Center is another possible educational event location.)

2. May ephemeral walk,

3. Westminster Town Forest walk

d. Report from Naomi Craig on Ash tree inventory app. Naomi attended this workshop given at the Rockingham Free Public Library on February 8, 2020. She learned how to document ash trees in the app that she now has downloaded and would be happy to share the info with others. Identifying the infestation status of the ashes was not discussed, as it was primarily foresters in attendance. We will follow up at a subsequent meeting to determine if we want to recruit volunteers to work on an inventory project.

6. New Business (Discussion / Action) –

a) Road crew has been invited to discuss issues of mutual concern 7:45 –8:25.

Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman), Ben Masure, and Jason Benson from the Westminster Town Road Crew came to join us. We gave a little background about the history of the Conservation Commission and then engaged in a fruitful and positive discussion of points of mutual interest to

all. The road crew has 70 miles of road to maintain (50 miles is gravel), plus state requirements to implement. It is a huge job that they manage. Chuck emphasized that the Conservation Commission can help, especially during mud season, by educating the public about planning ahead to minimize driving (walking, carpooling, arranging deliveries to be made at homes near the entrance to the gravel road, coordinating and postponing oil deliveries, etc.)

We discussed a number of issues including mowing methods and winter road maintenance including methods to reduce salt use in sensitive habitat. It was suggested that if members of the public have plantings they are concerned about during mowing seasons, they should mark these with stakes and flagging.

The crew is very open to hearing our thoughts and concerns, and shares our desire to protect and support the environment.

We briefly discussed the potential ash tree inventory project with the Road Crew. Surveying and documenting 70 miles of roadways for ashes is a daunting undertaking. Further discussion is needed to decide how to proceed.

7. Other Business:

Naomi Craig reports that she was officially accepted by the Selectboard as a member of the WCC. Thank you and welcome to Naomi officially!

8. Date of Next Meeting: March 26, 2020 7:15, Westminster Institute

9. Adjournment at 8:45 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Rachael Shaw, secretary