

## WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### Meeting, Thursday, 1/4/24 at 7:15 P.M

1. Meeting called to order via Zoom at 7:15 p.m. Present: Kestrel Craig, Kathy Kingston, Tatiana Schreiber, Rachael Shaw, Sarah Waldo, guest: Abigail Altabef.  
Following a discussion of the length of our meeting, we decided as a group to start our meetings at 7:00 and go until 8:30 if needed, going forward.
2. Adjustments to Agenda: none
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 12/7/23 – minutes accepted with two corrections. Under section 5 a.: change “is on hiatus” to “has no programming scheduled”. Under section 7 d: change “Westminster Planning Commission have made” to “Westminster Planning Commission will make”.
4. Communications and Public Comment:  
We received a request from the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association asking us to write a letter of support to help the Pinnacle obtain grants from VHCB (VT Housing and Conservation Board) or other funding sources. We moved that The Westminster Conservation Commission agrees to support the WHPA efforts to acquire two new parcels, by supporting the letter that Sarah Waldo has presented to us today, and we appoint Sarah to sign the letter on behalf of the WCC. Tatiana proposed, Kestrel seconded, motion passed unanimously.
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –
  - a) Beaver Working Group/BEEC program –  
The BWG continues efforts to schedule a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the Town putting in a grant-funded deceiver in a culvert under Henwood Hill Road. Another deceiver may be put in to the north of the Westminster West

firehouse, which may be privately funded, as it's not on town land.

b) Continue comments on Natural Resources section of TP- Sarah, Tatiana and Rachael met for a work session on Dec 20 and continued with comments. Kathy will look at these in the next few days and add any comments. Another work session will be scheduled for mid-late January.

c) Winter tracking event - event is on Feb 11. Rachael will ask Martha Mitchell if she can attend to help identify tracks. Rachael will work on the press release. Will send to Gazette, Front Porch Forum (Sarah), LEAG, and the Whistler.

d) Other programs/projects – follow up

1. wildlife corridors- Sarah will locate Ann Kerry's contact information and send it to Kathy.

2. riparian buffer project- Tatiana scheduled a phone meeting with Cory Ross on Tuesday, Jan 9. to discuss strategies, funding sources, and next steps to plan a project, ideally along Henwood Hill Road.

3. biodiversity inventories- Kathy had forwarded (to WCC) a PDF of the 4 year project that Guilford did with the Guilford Conservation Commission, Patti Smith and BEEC. Funding source of that project unknown by us. Sarah and Kathy will both try to get more information about the funding sources.

e) Church planting – Windham County NRCD (Natural Resources Conservation District) Plant and Tree Sale order- Tatiana and Kathy will look at the plant lists (both NRCD and FEDCO), and meet January 19 at 10 am to develop a planting plan. Kathy will request that the Selectboard put this planting budget request on their Jan 24 meeting agenda.

f) Act 59, Community Resilience and BioDiversity Protection Act (CRBPA) Discuss ANR (Agency of Natural Resources) initiative (30% land conserved by 2030, 50% by 2050). Nature For Justice and ANR are working on this initiative. Conserve= permanently protect. Conserved land must have ecological value, biodiversity value, and sustainable long-range management of natural resources. They would like input

about which lands we know of that are in conservation. VT Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) website says that they are still collecting feedback. We were not clear on the definition of conserved land. We need to decide if we want to submit a letter. They would like people from all backgrounds to join focus groups. We could consider joining or leading a focus group this Spring, possibly on the topic of biodiversity in agriculture.

g) VCRD (VT Council on Rural Development)  
community visioning - how would CC be involved? - postpone discussion

h) Town Forest management - postpone discussion

6. New Business: none
7. Other Business: none
8. Date of Next Meetings: Feb 1 and Feb 29, 7:00 p.m.
9. Adjournment at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Rachael Shaw, secretary