

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 5/22/25 at 7:00 P.M

In person: Westminster Institute

To join by Zoom, contact

westminstervtconservation@gmail.com

1. Call to Order . Meeting called to order at 7:00. Present: Tatiana Schreiber, Kestrel Craig, Rachael Shaw, Jim Calchera, Ben Masure (road crew foreman)
2. Adjustments to Agenda: no adjustments
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 4/24/25 – Minutes read. Kestrel moved we accept, Jim seconded. Minutes accepted by unanimous consent.
4. Communications and Public Comment:
 - a. Email communications
 - i. Communication from Vermont Invasive Species Coordinator (Noah Hoffman, ANR) about a recent gathering on invasive species management. Sounds like it was a very interesting event – a lot of strategies on knotweed, and a presentation on changing the language around invasive species. Presentation slides are included in the email, which is now located in the AVCC listserv folder in our gmail.
 - ii. VECAN – Vermont Energy and Climate Action newsletter is in the Newsletters folder in gmail. Many interesting information there. Among the highlights, Vermont’s state budget includes a modest appropriation to support the foundational work in the Vermont Treasurer’s office to implement the [Climate Superfund Act](#) by undertaking a cost assessment of the climate damages caused by fossil fuel companies, who will be required to pay into a fund to help pay for adaptation and resilience investments. Find out more about the Climate Superfund appropriation and other recent legislative news by checking out VECAN’s most recent Climate Dispatch [here](#).
 - iii. Rockingham CC agendas and minutes AND Rockingham Energy Committee agendas and minutes will be in that folder in gmail. Would be great to have brief report of highlights of what they are up to at each of our meetings in case there is something we want to coordinate with them. Rockingham minutes mentioned an opportunity for input on swimming/fishing/paddling access near where the Blake and Higgins dam was removed. [See email dated May 5th from Vermont River Conservancy/Hayley Kolding about a gathering June 18th by the river – contact them by June 1]
 - iv. AVCC listserv discussion of bill H.326, a ban on rodenticides with exemptions, that's had a lot of testimony so far in the House Agriculture Committee. Folks can learn more about it here: <https://mailchi.mp/protectourwildlifevt.org/>

<https://sus11adminmailchimp.com/campaigns/edit/id6417484-6419041?e=7ba1951114> Shrewsbury CC had an educational program on this topic.

v. We did not get our AVCC “Tiny grants” but the tiny grants that did get funded are listed. See the AVCC listserv folder in gmail. About \$4,000 total was granted to eight conservation commissions across four counties (average amount \$500). 31 requests received.

vi. Vermont Natural Resources Council climate dispatch newsletter. Mentioned that a bill advanced through a key Senate committee to ban toxic PFAS chemicals in dental floss, cleaning products, firefighting gear and fluorinated containers (H.238). Passed in the House, appears that it will pass in the Senate.

vii. Black ash workshops: The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation announced that Abenaki educators and basket makers Kerry Wood and Aaron Wood will be facilitating two black ash workshops this spring, to facilitate cultural exchange and learning. They will be pounding logs from ash trees harvested on site, storing them as splints for generations of future basket makers, and learning more about the art and tradition of black ash pounding and basket making. The public is welcome and there is no cost to attend. Here are a few event details: Sunday, June 15th from 10 AM - 4 PM: Black ash workshop at [Bomoseen State Park](#) day use area (no entrance fee required). Monday, June 16th from 10 AM - 4 PM: Black ash workshop at a private landowner's at [143 Channel Rd., Tinmouth](#). To facilitate communication the day prior, please [REGISTER HERE](#) (<https://forms.office.com/g/f4JFGCCAgD>

viii. Vermont Community Forestry notes there's a state campaign to avoid spread of invasive species seeds. To view a short video about the campaign and the pests they're focused on, visit: [Arrive Clean, Leave Clean – VTinvasives.org](#). Signage is available - maybe we could use once we have our kiosk built.

ix. Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Conference – May 29th, Randolph, Thursday, May 29, 2025 8:30am-3:45pm

Vermont State University – Randolph Campus

Registration Cost Lunch included (vegetarian & gluten-free options available). Cost is \$20 per person until May 15th; \$30 per person May 16-28th. [View agenda](#) [Learn more and register!](#)

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –

- a. Road crew visit, road salt issues \$14.50 yard for sand, \$100 per ton of salt (about a yard). Only sand is put on the 50 miles of dirt roads, only salt is used on the asphalt roads. Ben will send us a link to a 45 minute video of winter road care. He is willing to help with locating areas that could be “reduced salt”. We will all suggest areas which could be marked “reduced salt, sensitive area” (or similar) due to their proximity to wetlands. Road crew will also suggest potential sites. We will also develop educational materials to inform residents about the reason for this. Tatiana viewed 2 bloated wood frogs near the Westminster West School this Spring, which can be a result of salt absorption. Ben said that due to many small storms and a serious winter, they used almost twice as much salt and sand as the previous year.

b) Town Plan/Planning Commission listening sessions – Tatiana has not heard back from Lachlan Francis, will follow up.

c) Other programs/projects – follow up:

1. Green Up day planning – report back. The article that just came out in the Gazette covers everything.

2. Wildflower walk report: It was just Rachael and Kestrel that went on a three mile hike in the rain on the Hidden Springs trails, saw lots of ephemerals. Will do a better job with publicity next year.

3. Wildlife Crossings – info from Putney CC -Tatiana got lots of information from Ann Kerry on Putney's wildlife crossing project which they did over a period of 5 years. It involved a tracking training program done by Patty Smith and many volunteers who spent time monitoring tracks near roadsides following snowstorms. Good future project. Could involve a grant. Would involve volunteers that aren't on the commission.

4. Riparian buffer project/potential birding event - Cory Ross and Vic Baisley both interested in a birding event, Tatiana suggested during the fall migration. Cory has submitted the grant proposal for the riparian buffer project.

5. Town forest planning – planning forum – we edited the press release for The Shopper (Kestrel), the Gazette (Jim), the Reformer (Tatiana), and the Commons (Jim), the Whistler (Tatiana). Jim met with Tim Morton to help decipher his notes. Tim suggests surveys especially of the log landing area, and the southern portion, where boundaries are unclear. He also suggested replacing signage along the boundaries. He reblazed boundaries where they were visible. We will all look at Jim's suggested outline for the forum and make any suggestions so that we can focus on planning at the next meeting.

6. New Business:

a) Planting project by church – signage and maintenance - Rachael and Tatiana will plan to do some weed clearing. We will all come up with a possible name for the planting. Everyone to brainstorm potential names. Kestrel will help create a sign.

7. Other Business: none

8. Date of Next Meeting: June 26th, Westminster West library

9. Adjournment adjourned at 8:36 Jim moved we adjourned, Kestrel seconded. Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Rachael Shaw, secretary