

## WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 6/26/25 at 7:00 P.M

In person: Westminster West Library

To join by Zoom, contact

[westminstervtconservation@gmail.com](mailto:westminstervtconservation@gmail.com)

1. Call to Order: meeting called to order at 7:10 pm  
Present: Jim Calchera, Kestrel Craig, Rachael Shaw, Tatiana Schreiber
2. Adjustments to Agenda :none
3. Acceptance of Minutes: 5/22/25 – Minutes read and accepted by unanimous consent.
4. Communications and Public Comment:
  - a) Email communications -

Tatiana summarized the emails we have gotten recently from various environmental organizations.
  - i. Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program (UVM) – newsletter “You’ve got Tree mail” moved to the “newsletters” folder. Please check it out. One upcoming event of interest: Forest Stewards Network webinar on ash tree management – July 2, info and registration here:  
<https://foreststewardsguild.org/event/eyes-on-the-future-of-ash-incorporating-lingering-ash-detection-and-breeding-into-monitoring-and-management/>
  - ii. Connecticut River Conservancy newsletter “Your latest river news from Kathy” moved to the “newsletters” folder.
  - a. Important info on draft environmental impact statements for relicensing of hydro dams which have been

published by federal regulators. Lots of info there if you want to make a comment on the draft statements. There's an in-person meeting to provide comments: [In-Person Public Comment Sessions](#)  
July 17, 2025, Session A: 1pm - 3pm, Session B: 6pm - 8pm, Bellows Falls Opera House

- b. Clean water "road show": Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> (!) Register now. See details in the newsletter but this looks really interesting – several VT Clean Water program projects across Saxtons and Williams Rivers in SR, BF, Westminster. [More Information and Register Here](#).
- c. July 19<sup>th</sup> – Guided paddle at Herricks Cove - Bring own canoe or kayak or they can provide but you have to let them know. Register [here](#)
- iii. Vermont Energy and Climate (VECAN) newsletter moved to "newsletters" folder. A lot of information there on state legislative action on various environmental and energy policies, with links to articles that explain these further; also info on federal policies such as environmental and energy implications of the federal budget bill. Tatiana did not have time to read and summarize these.
- iv. Email from Vermont Natural Resources Council moved to "newsletters." Reports on state legislative policies they supported, including H.238 which "builds on previous bans of PFAS in products including apparel, cookware, cosmetics and menstrual products, ski wax, and children's products. And these bans compliment Vermont's first-in-the-nation medical monitoring law, which [VNRC] championed in 2022, to ensure that corporate polluters shoulder the financial burden of monitoring the health of Vermonters who have been exposed to high levels of PFAS through no fault of their own." VNRC also lobbied for ban on neonicotinoid

pesticides, which was enacted (with a lot of exemptions.)

- v. Rockingham Energy Committee minutes shared with us. Moved to “Rockingham agendas and minutes.” See these for info on BF thermal energy proposal; window dressers project; and a guest speaker on battery storage.
- vi. Forest pest educational info – See emails from Ginger Nickerson, dated June 9<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup>... we can order these educational materials (fact sheets, posters, brochures) for distribution if we want them... info on many different pests and diseases and best management practices is available – this from VT Urban & Community Forestry Program (part of UVM Extension) Tatiana asked if someone could investigate this and see if there’s anything we want to order? Kestrel will look into it.
- vii. Agenda and minutes from last Rockingham CC meeting moved to “Rockingham agenda and minutes.” Tatiana did not have time to read this prior to the meeting. If someone else could review these minutes each month and report on key things that we might want to know about and/or collaborate on, that would be great. Tatiana encouraged everyone to read the minutes. Tatiana also suggests Rachael add both Rockingham and Westminster Planning Commission when she submits our minutes, so they get a copy as well. Rachael will send out a synopsis of the RCC minutes to the WCC via email.

viii. Info on updates to Vermont wetlands maps moved to AVCC info and resources folder. The Vermont Wetland Maps are getting an update. Using new technology and high-quality aerial images, DEC will update maps for the entire state to better identify wetlands and thus protect, restore, and reduce impacts to wetlands. The updates are required by the Flood Safety Act, Act 121, passed in 2024 and are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2026. Info on how to read the new maps (in draft form) is in an email from Zapata Courage in the AVCC folder.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –

a) Road salt issues – identifying sensitive areas -Rachael will reach out to Ben and ask for road maintenance video link, ask for map of paved roads that they salt, then we can all choose roads to survey. Ben may also have some suggestions as to appropriate low salt areas. Need to clarify which roads are town vs. state maintained. We discussed sections of Route 5, and Westminster West Rd. from the village south except between Cross Rd. and Milkhouse Land.

b) Town Plan/Planning Commission listening sessions –still no clarity on their process. Tatiana has been in touch with Lou re: next steps and will follow up again.

c) Blake and Higgins dam removal – Peter Bergstrom (RCC), Haley from the Vermont River Conservancy and Kestrel met there on June 18. Area is recovering well. There is a path that leads to the river and a set of stairs. Currently The Vermont River Conservancy owns the site but wants someone local to buy it. They find that local ownership promotes better care of sites. Perhaps the town of Westminster would be interested in buying it and the WCC and other volunteers could steward the area? Kestrel will reach out to Haley and ask her if she would be willing

to help us draw up a proposal to present to the Town. Add to August agenda.

d) Planting by church – signage and maintenance –

Fruits and Flowers for Wildlife: A project of the Westminster Conservation Commission. Rachael and Tatiana will clear growth away from the shrubs on Sunday June 29. Rachael and Jim will see if they have wood for Kestrel to create a sign.

e) Town Forest forum – planning - Tatiana will send press release and event info to the *Reformer*.

Already in *Gazette*, *Vermont Journal* and *Shopper* (Kestrel by the 18th), Jim will get it in *The Commons*. Rachael will ask about the sandwich boards and get them put up by the 17th if possible.

Tatiana will bring an easel pad, Jim will bring pens and pads, Kestrel will bring markers. Space is reserved.

### Town Forest Public Input Forum

July 31, 2025 7 - 9 PM Westminster Institute

Cider, cheese and crackers, (Rachael) veggies and dip (Tatiana), cookies (Jim/Lisa, Kestrel)

Cups and paper plates, napkins. (Rachael)

Kestrel: research how to present a slide show at the Institute.

Include an outline of the evening schedule in the slideshow.

Get there at 6:30 to set up.

Outline:

Overview of event -Tatiana (2 min)

Introduction- Jim (10 min)

Special Features: Jim and Kestrel photos (8 min)

Explain format (Tatiana)

Break out sessions (50 min max)

Share back- 5 minutes from each group (20 min)

Wrap up and closing: Rachael

More detailed outline is in our google drive.

6. New Business: none
7. Other Business: none
8. Date of Next Meeting: July 31 (Town Forest Forum)  
Regularly scheduled meeting (July 24) will be cancelled
9. Adjournment 8:50 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Rachael Shaw,  
Secretary