

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 6/25/26 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 7:06 pm Present: Tatiana Schreiber (Chair), Jim Calchera, Kestrel Craig (Treasurer) Rachael Shaw (Secretary), Amy Moreland

2. Adjustments to Agenda - none

3. Acceptance of Minutes: 5/28/26 – minutes read and accepted by unanimous consent.

4. Communications and Public Comment:

a) Email communications - Jane Fitzwilliam would like to be a friend of the Commission but not officially join the WCC. She may be interested in helping us set up a Facebook page if we decide we want one. She will write an article on the rodenticide issue as a private citizen.

Tatiana will send out the communications report separately. These communications are all available in our google drive/email account.

Email dated June 17: A UVM Extension got a grant to create a [website](#) about sustainable use of road salt, with stories of experiences in Chittenden County Kris Stepenuck, of UVM Extension and a professor at the Rubenstein School at UVM offers to come to CC meetings to share information about the pros and cons of reducing road salt. We could invite the road crew to that meeting.

Amy reported from the various newsletters we receive:

- i. Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (WCNRCD) Kayak for Conservation (event happens 2 days a month —water chestnut removal projects)
- ii. AVCC- There are many ecently shared resources re: trail development in our email.

iii. Draft Tactical Basin Plan for the West, Saxtons and Williams Rivers is accepting comments until July 15th

iv. Amy reviewed the legislative report of items that passed, stalled or vetoed.

Amy's report is in the drive in the folder Newsletters and Public Comments

b) Rockingham CC minutes report - Rachael reported on what the RCC is up to: bike and hike trail development, learning about balcony solar systems, and a new pollinator garden at Vermont Academy.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –

a) Town Plan input process:

Confirm date/place for work session - July 13, 6 pm Westminster West library

b) AVCC Regional CC meeting report - Tatiana reported on this. Alex Connizzo works for both VNRC and AVCC. AVCC has an all volunteer board of 8 members, founded in 1990. They have a YouTube channel. Participants discussion on whether CCs should take positions on legislative issues; there were differences of opinion on this: unresolved. Dummerston CC mentioned that they attend Planning Commission (PC) meetings, they have a lot of fun, they always have cookies. They try to support the interests of their members. Guilford did the Natural Resources Inventory, with Patti Smith. It is on sale for \$20, \$7 of each sale goes to their land conservation fund. Guilford created a welcome guide for new members of the community, so the CC did a "how to live on your land" that provided stewardship information. They had a retreat, social evening with a potluck. (Rachael offered to host a potluck for the WCC and a few guests.) Putney (Ann Kerry): their CC gets outdoors a lot, recently had a beaver program, wildflower walk, trail work. They were working with PC to create a forest block overlay district, but some objected and it's now permanently delayed. Laurel from Halifax- 5 members, beaver issues, advocating putting in beaver deceivers, Put in a section on protecting culverts (advocating beaver deceivers) in their town plan, info on invasive plants. Newfane: 1.5 people. Maintaining the trails in their Newfane town forest. Rockingham (Christine)- 7 members, educational events, bluebird boxes. Brattleboro: had someone from Dark Skies Vermont come visit. Marlboro: 1 member. Having a table at town meeting was helpful. Important to stay positive.

They start meetings with members reporting their recent nature sightings.. Hayley Kolding of the Vermont River Conservancy spoke about careful placement of trails to preserve wildlife habitat. It is valuable to hear what the other southern VT CC's are working on.

c) Rodenticide campaign - Kestrel reports that snaptraps are the most humane option for rodent infestations. All agreed with the CCs doing a campaign to inform the public of the danger of anti-coagulants on all animals and birds of prey, which would include alternatives.

d) Facebook page possibility- doesn't seem like it would be a good fit for our CC, but we may want to develop a quarterly newsletter. We could have a subcommittee that works on this.

e) Town Forest AVCC grant planning

RE: Ginnever property- currently there appear to be no grassland birds (bobolinks or meadowlarks) using the fields for nesting at this time reports Kate McKay, avian technician with WC NRDC. Connecticut River Grassland Birds has materials on the campaign to delay mowing. Kestrel will have some flyers printed and put them up. Jim spoke with an engineer but they don't give any advice until they see the site. He has not reached a sawmill yet, but Tatiana will check with Kathy Kingston who may have locust posts we can use. Kestrel will set up budget information in the google drive, both for our WCC budget and the mini grant budget. Rachael reported that Steven Major is willing to help build the kiosk. Marie Caduto gave our contact info to Charlie Hohn to schedule a wetland inventory this fall. Tatiana noted that the fiscal year ends June 30th; we should purchase any supplies we need now (such as for the church planting sign) before June 30th if possible, as we still have money in our budget.

6. New Business:

a) Review open meeting FAQ - postponed

7. Other Business: Rachael will ask at the Town Hall about whether we can use a Town Zoom account to setup a Zoom option for future meetings.

8. Date of Next Meeting: July 30th, (let Kelley know) Westminster West Library

9. Adjournment at 8:30 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Rachael Shaw