

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting, Thursday, 7/30/26 at 7:00 P.M

In person: Westminster West Library

To join by Zoom, contact

westminstervtconservation@gmail.com

1. **Call to Order** at 7:10 pm. Present: Tatiana Schreiber (chair), Rachael Shaw (secretary), Jim Calchera, Kestrel Craig. Absent: Amy Moreland

2. **Adjustments to Agenda** none

3. **Acceptance of Minutes: 6/25/26** – minutes read and accepted by unanimous consent.

4. **Communications and Public Comment:**

a) Email communications - Discussed which emails we receive need to be in the minutes, likely fewer than we have been including. Conditions for including emails: those likely to have relevant interest to local residents..

i. One that initiated some discussion and interest in learning more was an email from Zapata Courage (Vermont DEC wetland ecologist) 7/16 regarding wetland rule changes - **PROPOSE RULE CHANGE DETAILS**

- Elimination of allowed uses for housing in unmapped Class II wetlands.

- * Changing the housing allowed use from using wetland mapping to using boots-on-the-ground wetland delineations.

- Requirement for a wetland delineation within the last 10 years, for allowed use housing projects within the 26 to 50 foot buffer of Class II wetland.

As amended, the construction of residential housing and associated linear utilities are allowed uses within the outer portion of Class II wetland buffers in designated areas. In addition, linear utilities are also allowed in designated areas and Class II wetlands, provided that best management practices are met. To learn more: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/wetlands-rulemaking>

b) Rockingham CC minutes report - no minutes available online from their July 13 meeting, Rachael will email them to ask for a copy of the minutes.

5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –**

a) Town Plan input process: Tatiana sent an email to Mike McConnell at the WRC (document with the comments we made reviewing our prior comments) to ensure that the work we doing is useful. Hasn't heard back yet. We confirmed date/place for work session - August 10, WW Library, 6 pm

b) Rodenticide campaign - public education (writing something for Gazette, put info on Town Website). Possibly a speaker from Tufts if we were to do a public program. There was an AVCC List serve notice about a rodenticide educational event put on with speaker Anna Morris, Director of the Animal Ambassadors Program at VINS, member Association of Avian Trainers and Educators. Maybe we could collaborate with the RCC and co-sponsor a program at the Rockingham Library. Rachael will ask RCC if they are interested. Tatiana will contact Anna Morris.

H758 Bill to prevent use of Second Generation Rodenticides (stalled in committee) because there need to be viable alternatives available. Tatiana will contact Michelle Bos-Lun to ask if she has resources or speaker suggestions. Tatiana and Kestrel will do additional research to support an educational campaign.

c) Church planting, sign and maintenance - Rachael and Tatiana did some clearing around the plants. Most doing very well. Kestrel is almost done with the sign, she has to apply the finish, she will install it soon. We will schedule a work day for mid October, and try to recruit a couple volunteers to help us. Will schedule it during our August meeting. Would be good to have an article in the Gazette sharing about the plantings, signage photo.

c) Town Forest AVCC grant planning

Jim reports that John Williams (sawmill owner) is willing to donate some locust posts for our kiosk. He will receive credit on the kiosk and in a Gazette article. Kestrel reports that commonly kiosks include the following information. A trail kiosk should have: a map, notice of rules, warning of hazards (ticks, steep hills, etc), contact information so visitors can report problems, possibly information on specific species, historical uses, etc., plaque for donors. Kestrel also suggested reaching out to Jesse Haas regarding historical uses of the land , which she will follow up with.

Permitting Process: Jim completed the VT Agency of Natural Resources Permit Navigator process (questions answered very conservatively) which showed that we potentially could need Act 250 permit, Wetlands permit, Flood Plain and River Corridor permit (Jessica Barseleau requested proposed parking area design plans). Operational Storm Water Discharge Permit shouldn't be needed. Jim will follow up with the Pinnacle folks to see if they needed any Vermont permits for trails, parking areas and kiosks. Jim

will continue work with the permits and finalize the parking lot design. Jim will contact excavator Charlie Lovell to see if they can walk the log landing together. Kestrel will begin designing the kiosk. September annual AVCC meeting- optionally we will present on what we have done so far. If we are not far enough along, we can present the following year. Ribbon Cutting event potentially in October if work is complete. December: interim report on our progress is due.

6. **New Business:**

a) Recruitment of volunteers for CC projects - write to a list of people who have come to our events in the past. Rachael will create email list by August 10.. and Tatiana will create a short survey to include to solicit their interest and availability. Include people who we think may be interested who did not come to our programs. High school students who need community Service hours are another possibility. Could also publish the survey in the Gazette looking for responses to our survey questions. Potential projects could be our plantings by the WW Cemetery, work on the parking area, kiosk, etc.

b) Review open meeting FAQ - postponed.

7. **Other Business:** Fall birding event? Tatiana will follow up with Cory Ross (WCNRD) and ask about the grant status for work at SEVCA, and interest in doing another birding event this fall. Our last one was October of 2025.

8. **Date of Next Meeting:** August 27. 2026, 7 pm. Westminster Institute

9. **Adjournment at 8:30 pm.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Rachael Shaw, secretary