

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday Sept 24th, 7 PM

In person: Westminster West Library

To join by Zoom, contact

westminstervtconservation@gmail.com

1. Call to Order at 7:00 pm

Present: Tatiana Schreiber (chair), Jim Calchera, Kestrel Craig (treasurer), Amy Moreland, Rachael Shaw (secretary). Guests: John Greenman, Phil Pellerin, Jessie Chickering, Izaac Pellerin, Shannon Burke, Sylvia Rhomberg.

2. Adjustments to Agenda: no adjustments.

3. Acceptance of Minutes: 8/27/26 –minutes read and accepted by unanimous consent.

4. Communications and Public Comment:

a) Email communications/newsletter summaries. Tatiana and Amy shared recent communications and newsletters received via email. - These documents are available in our Google Drive. Many interesting topics and ways to self educate, as well as short surveys to fill out, actions that can be taken, and grant possibilities. Topics include: groups for cooperative invasive species control, data center policies, forest block connectivity, slash walls, road salt, mapping, trail development, AVCC Dues, VT Fish and Wildlife webinar series, window insulation, forest land acquisition, country wide energy data website, river paddling outings, etc. We have so many ways to learn and to contribute to the environment.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action) –

a) Church planting, sign and maintenance - Oct 18th event - change to 11 am. Need to contact the potential volunteers to let them know the time change. Rachael will do so.

b) Town Forest AVCC grant planning

Jim asked the Bazin Brothers company about possible discounts on the cost of gravel. No definitive response on that yet. Road Crew Foreman Ben Masure will go out there to put eyes on the area soon.

1. Neighbor input/discussion - We were joined by six neighbors who live near or abut the Westminster Town Forest on the East Putney Brook side. Comments and questions included the following:

- Residents are currently maintaining the road beyond the town turnaround; one resident mentioned having invested \$2900 in road repairs/materials in the past couple years. Concern is that more traffic will degrade the road more quickly.
- The culvert on the trail portion of East Putney Brook Rd (Westminster West access side) has washed out twice and is currently not in good repair.
- What is the current classification of the East Putney Brook Road/trail section- Class 4 Road? Rural Trail?
- Phil Pellerin owns the land that the town turnaround is located on, and sometimes uses the clearing for his sawmill. The space is not reliably available for parking.
- Could the (East Putney Brook Road/trail) be officially classified a trail, encouraging only walkers and bikers, with a gate prohibiting cars/trucks/ATV's that could be opened for any maintenance?
- Could a bear proof trash can be installed at any public site? Habituated bears are a problem.
- Could the residents help devise the rules/signage that would be posted?
- What is the current tax status of the property?
- Could the Town Forest block, or portions of it, be officially placed in conservation?
- There is concern that if a parking lot was installed, there could be more troublesome/illegal activity there, and residents would have to deal with that presence/problems.
- Could parking be arranged on the Quarry Road side? Possibly near or on the Ginnever property? Is it possible to have smaller parking areas on each side of the forest access?
- Better to improve existing trails rather than cutting new trails through the woodland, although some kind of new trail will be needed to connect Ginnever property to existing trails.
- How to discourage/forbid ATV use, delivery trucks trying to go through and getting stuck.

- Possible offer of financial help from one of the neighbors, if project was in line with his vision.
- Izaac has a sawmill that could be used to mill lumber for a kiosk.
- Tatiana will send Jessie Chickering the report from the Town Forest forum.

2. Next steps - continue researching options for the parking area; look into the questions raised regarding tax status of the land, and alternate parking locations; communicate with town selectboard and road foreman re: next steps. Keep email list/ neighbors updated with progress.

c) Rodenticide campaign/report back from Rockingham CC meeting - We received an email from VINS saying they may have could be grant money to offset the \$350 cost on VINS end, if they are presenting. Tatiana moved that a subcommittee on rodenticide presentation be formed consisting of Amy, Rachael and Tatiana. Jim seconded. Motion passed by unanimous consent. Program could take place at the Rockingham library or the Putney library in Nov, Dec or Jan. Amy will follow up with Putney and Dummerston CC's about co-sponsoring. Rockingham willing to co-sponsor (help with publicity but their CC has no budget). Tatiana will follow up with Michelle Bos-Lun about possible other presenters who lobbied at the statehouse for rodenticide regulation.

d) Recruitment of volunteers for CC projects/report-back from West West fair and Gazette survey - Made several new connections at the fair. Thank you to Amy and Tatiana for tabling. Rachael will follow up by sending out survey, entering names into our google contacts group. One of the visitors to the CC table may be interested in joining the CC. Few if any of the visitors knew Westminster had a Town Forest, or where it was.

e) **Town Plan input process - All members should make notes individually and bring them to next meeting prepared to share them, no extra meetings will be scheduled.** Finishing our comments will be on the agenda for the October meeting.

6. New Business: none
7. Other Business: none
8. Date of Next Meeting: October 22, 7 PM, Westminster Institute
9. Adjournment at 8:31 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Rachael Shaw, Secretary

