

DRAFT
Town of Waitsfield
Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2019

Members Present: Phil Huffman, Chair, Leo Laferriere, Vice Chair, Chris Loomis, Secretary, Bob Cook, Mark Haberle. Members Absent: Bruno Grimaldi, Treasurer, Ted Joslin, Spencer Potter.

Meeting was called to order at 6:42 by Chairman Huffman.

1) Welcome, introductions, review agenda – no changes

2) Public Input –

- a. Curt Lindberg. Discussion of the Half-Earth Initiative and potential WCC involvement.
 - i. Laferriere provided some constructive input regarding the initiative and public interaction.
 - ii. Haberle offered insight into process and scope
 - iii. Cook offered concerns about how the role of the WCC fits with this initiative
 - iv. Loomis offered concerns about the WCC current and ongoing workload
 - v. Huffman noted the others' concerns and offered that it would be appropriate for the WCC to be at the Half-Earth initiative discussions, as it would provide insight into how others in the Mad River Valley are thinking about the initiative.
- b. Additionally, the WCC had a discussion of Curt's interest in joining the WCC.

3) Review and approve minutes of 3/18/19 meeting.

- a. Laferriere moves to accept the DRAFT minutes, Seconded by Cook. MOTION CARRIES unanimously.

4) Election of Officers

- a. Discussion of volunteer roles
- b. MOTION by Cook, to continue with the current officers for the next year, Seconded by Haberle. MOTION CARRIES unanimously.

5) Wu Ledges – postponed until later in the meeting.

6) Austin Parcel – Update on Invasives project and 6/1 Community Stewardship day.

- a. Haberle provides an update on the project
- b. Press release for the 6/1 work day has been reviewed and submitted to the Valley Reporter.
- c. Current needs – Full news article for the VR, including description of the 2018 progress, report on the metrics used to measure success, invitation to volunteer for the project.

7:10 Bob Kogut arrives – President of the Mad River Riders

d. Project details discussion

- i. Disposal of cut invasive materials
 1. Compost in place – 2018 cuttings
 2. Move new cuttings to “burrito wrap” – heavy duty plastic wrap on wood pallets, to be located toward the western edge of the parcel
 3. Haberle will communicate with Caitlin Cusack at VLT about possible need to move dirt to set up burrito wrap storage platform.
 4. Huffman reads an email received from Caitlin on the Austin work and other matters
- ii. Continue to promote the “demonstration project” aspect of the project.
- iii. Discussion of creating a photo-log of the project
- iv. Laferriere – poses a question about the temperature inside the existing piles of composting knotweed. Perhaps include this in the VR articles as a point of interest.
- v. Discussion of the idea to use grazing to help with the knotweed.

5) Wu Ledges Town Forest

- a. Discussion with Bob Kogut, President of the Mad River Riders.
 - i. Offered help with trail maintenance
 - ii. Offered support for the trail signage and kiosk project
 - iii. Provided background on the MRR and current trail inventory mileage and membership count.
 - iv. Discussion of current MRR projects and collaboration with the State of VT FPR lands and with other cooperators.
 - v. Noted that the MRR uses the online “app” called Trail Forks to show trail closure and opening dates.
 - vi. Asked for approval to include the officially designated and mapped trails on Wu Ledges Forest on the MRR 2019 trail map.
 1. Discussion
 2. Decision by the group to approve the trails noted on the kiosk maps to be included in the MRR maps
 3. WCC noted that they will reach out the MRR to help with appropriate trail assistance.
 4. More on the MRR maps – discussion of desire by WCC to include some language on the MRR maps to address restrictions on use, trail markings and parking situation on Wu Ledges Town Forest.
- b. Kiosk Project
 - i. April 15 deadline for “group 3” of kiosk signs has been delayed
 - ii. Minor kiosks are part of the delay. Install dates are TBD
- c. Trail Maintenance. Huffman to reach out to Jon Jamieson and Sandy Lawton to set up a time to meet with sub-group (Huffman, Loomis, Cook) on-site on an upcoming evening to check out areas needing maintenance.
- d. Haskin parcel – no news

7) Scrag Mountain Town Forest

- a. Gateway project boundary marking
 - i. discussion about blazing and painting the boundary between Saffan retained lands and the Scrag Gateway parcel.
 - ii. Cook will reach out to consulting engineer Gunner McCain to get a quote to complete the survey work by blazing the boundary location.
- b. Discussion around developing a comprehensive management plan for Gateway Parcel. Further discussion with County Forester to come in upcoming months.
 - i. Plan will be an amendment/extension of 2012 comprehensive management plan for the pre-existing Town lands
 - ii. Timeline - ideally complete the plan in calendar year 2019
 - iii. Public involvement component – fall 2019?
 - iv. Potential to contract the plan development
 - v. Potential to develop the plan via WCC volunteer effort
- c. Trail Maintenance
 - i. some clearing of downed trees is needed at lower elevations
 - ii. trail development discussion – Act 250 review – discussion – potential changes being considered at the state legislature but likely won't be resolved until 2020 legislative session
 - iii. need to complete comprehensive management plan for Gateway Parcel first, then hire trail planning consultant to help identify potential trail opportunities/network on Gateway Parcel with strategic connections to existing and potential trails on pre-existing Town lands
- d. Map – Haberle will produce an 8-1/2' x 11" PDF map and send to Town Clerk for printing – will then be made available at Scrag trailhead kiosk
- e. Formalizing sugaring access rights with Dave Gavett – Loomis will ask Joslin to get recorded copy to VLT
- f. Monti Road neighbors – no news

8) Commission Vacancy

- a. Curt Lindberg - Had submitted a letter of interest along with his CV. Selectboard has indicated they would prefer not to assign one of their members to sit on the WCC.
 - i. MOTION by Laferriere that the Chair prepare and deliver to the Selectboard a memo recommending the board appoint Curt Lindberg to the WCC. Seconded by Haberle. MOTION CARRIES unanimously.

9) Status of funds, recap of expenditures

- a. no change to funds balance other than interest
- b. no expenditures approved at this meeting

10) Records Keeping

- a. Laferriere reports that he has received Tom Dean's detailed and bound agendas and minutes from his tenure, and will store them in the WCC file cabinet in the Town Offices
- b. Laferriere reads quotes from 1VSA:312 regarding commission records handling

c. Discussion of handling of monthly minutes and posting of draft minutes

11) Other Business

Next meetings – May 20 and June 17. 6:30 PM at Town Offices

12) No Executive Session

13) MOTION by Laferriere to adjourn, Seconded by Cook. MOTION CARRIES unanimously

Meeting Adjourned 10:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

Chris Loomis, Secretary