

Town of Waitsfield  
Conservation Commission  
DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
October 19, 2020

Members Present: Phil Huffman-Chair, Leo Laferriere-Vice Chair, Bruno Grimaldi-Treasurer, Chris Loomis-Secretary, Ted Joslin, Curt Lindberg, Bob Cook.

Public Present: None

1. Huffman opens the remote meeting on Zoom at 6:33 pm. Welcomes the MRVTV audience.
2. Public input – none
3. Minutes of 9/21/20 meeting  
Grimaldi makes the motion, seconded by Laferriere to approve the minutes as drafted.  
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Scrag Mt. Town Forest

Trail Planning – working group of Huffman, Loomis and Cook completed the scope of the contract with Sinuosity (Action Item from 9/21 minutes) and have gained Selectboard approval for the contract. Sinuosity will begin work immediately. Further thinking needed for public involvement portion of Sinuosity process.

Options – seek input at regular CC public meetings, online survey, online public session outside of regular CC meetings.

ACTION ITEM – Working group will continue to work with Sinuosity to develop public input protocols and strategies.

Cook notes that parking will soon become an issue as Scrag becomes more popular. Something we should be considering as we move through the process with Sinuosity and further actions beyond trail planning.

Other issues -

Stormwater pond management – Laferriere notes that the working group of himself, Loomis, and Cook concluded that a stone lined crossing or ford would work better than a culvert at the area south of the bridge. This work can wait till spring. The more pressing item is to clean out the small stormwater pond near the bridge before winter. Conversations with contractor are in process and there is a hope that we can get the work done this fall.

Discussion of the overgrowing vegetation along this section of the gravel drive. Regular brush-hogging / mowing has not been done and vegetation will need to be dealt with as part of the project.

Town road crew is not going to be available to do the work. Discussion of getting a quote to do the crossing when we have a contractor on site to do the pond cleanout.

ACTION ITEM - working group will work with a contractor to get the settling pond cleaned out before winter.

MOTION – by Cook, seconded by Laferriere to authorize the existing working group to identify the best local contractor option to clean out the stormwater settling pond before the bridge and hire a contractor to get the work done prior to winter freeze-up.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Funds for payment to come from account to be determined.

Map for distribution at the trailhead Kiosk - No news

Lot 42 – No news

Discussion of quiet title action process and potential procedure and costs.

5. Austin Parcel –

Lindberg provides an update on the fieldwork. VT Master Naturalist volunteers have completed their work and owe the CC a report on the progress. Plantings look good and knotweed is well controlled.

Loomis notes that beavers are present on the Lareau Swimhole parcel – there is a danger of them moving toward the Austin parcel. Joslin will reach out to the town to make sure they are aware that the Lareau trees are being damaged and help to plan for their protection.

6. Wu Ledges Town Forest. No news on public access issues.

Commission members report recent observations. Cook notes that the Town Administrator had some ideas for better signage on Hastings Road, but they have not been put into action yet.

7. Engagement with the Planning Commission on possible zoning changes and Act 171 compliance.

Huffman recaps the topic and summarizes the Planning Commission's 10/6 meeting regarding Act 171 compliance. PC has a working group now taking a look at this, Huffman was asked to be a part of the group on behalf of the Conservation Commission. He will continue to work with the working group and report back to the CC.

Cook notes that the technical aspect of the project is significant and suggests that the CC is an excellent resource to help the PC with the work. Further discussion about collaboration between the PC and CC.

8. Commission vacancies – no news

9. Tri-town collaboration -

Huffman recaps 9/29 webinar hosted by three towns conservation commissions (Waitsfield, Warren, Fayston) – focused on a presentation by Jens Hilke from VT Dept of Fish & Wildlife regarding forests, wildlife habitat, and communities in the Mad River Valley, excellent scientific data compiled 8-10 years ago through the collaborative Forests, Wildlife and Communities Project, and the Act 171 planning requirements. Huffman will send out a link to the recording to the CC distribution list. Comments on the “community values” aspect of the presentation. Discussion of this concept.

Next tri-town meeting – no news.

Composting – Lareau Farm/American Flatbread is not an option due to potential flooding. Other options are on the table, including private entities.

10. Status of funds - recap expenditures approved at this meeting. Grimaldi provides comments on the monthly report circulated prior to the meeting. Changes to funds are interest only.

No expenditures approved at this meeting.

11. Other business –

Association of VT Conservation Commissions virtual summit – 3 sessions upcoming. CC next meetings - 11/16 and 12/21 at 6:30 via zoom.

12. MOTION - by Lindberg, seconded by Grimaldi to go into executive session to discuss possible real estate transaction. MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY

CC goes into executive session at 8:31.

CC comes out of executive session at 9:19 with no action taken.

Grimaldi makes the motion to adjourn, seconded by Lindberg – MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 9:20PM

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Chris Loomis - Secretary