

Town of Waitsfield Conservation Commission

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2023

6:30 PM Via Zoom

Members Present: Huffman, Grimaldi, Loomis, Donaldson, Telep, Lindberg

Members Absent: Joslin, Cook, Laferriere

Lindberg opens the meeting at 6:36 PM

Welcome and Agenda Review – Led by Curt
No changes to agenda

Public Input
No public input

Review/approve 3/20/23 minutes – Led by All
MOTION to APPROVE March 20th minutes (with amendments) by Donaldson, SECONDED BY Loomis. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL. Huffman and Lindberg abstained as they missed the March meeting.

Tri-Town Conservation Commissions Meeting Highlights & Follow-up - Led by All
Bruno, Phil, Curt share some highlights. Well attended, productive meeting.
Of note was that the Town of Warren voted to increase funding for Warren CC from \$20K to \$50K for their acquisition fund.
Phil - Wildlife corridors, connectivity, and linkages go across the town boundaries and would be something for further discussion with the Valley town conservation commissions to collaborate on.
Curt - The Warren Development Review Board (DRB) is reaching out to the Warren Conservation Commission as they consider matters. Could be something to consider between the Waitsfield DRB and Waitsfield Conservation Commission.

2023 Stewardship Plans for Scrag and Wu Ledges – A Path Forward – Led by All
Hold till next meeting for Cook's attendance.

Election of Officers – Led by Curt
Bruno will continue as Treasurer.
Leo will continue as Vice Chair.
Curt will continue as Chair.
Need to replace the Secretary role.

MOTION to APPROVE on Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer roles by Grimaldi, SECONDED BY Huffman. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

Review and Discussion of Town Plan – Led by Curt

Leo wanted to give the town plan another read to ensure WCC had a chance to weigh in on it. Phil spoke about the importance of Act 171 Mapping Forest Blocks and Connectors and how that informs the Town Plan. Should be in good shape given the collaboration.

Select Board will have a public hearing in maybe early May or at a regular meeting on the town plan. Phil will pay attention to that.

Tardy Management Plan Update and Selectboard Discussion – Phil & Curt

Phil - Plugging away at the draft management plan for the Tardy property. Phil is making headway on it. Phil laid out a proposed tentative timeline that was supported by the WCC members:

- Finish a full draft within the next week by April 23rd to distribute to WCC members and send draft to VLT at the same time.
- Ask for comments back from WCC members by Monday the 30th. WCC members finds this reasonable to get comments back by then.
- Goal to have a preliminary vetted draft to share with the community before the May 15th WCC meeting and have time on that agenda for a public forum on the draft plan. May need to have a special session if WCC members have more substantial points to discuss.
- Phil will coordinate to have draft available to the public and Valley Reporter before the public forum.
- Goal to approve plan at the May 15th meeting and send to Select Board for their consideration. If there are significant comments from the public forum, then address and possibly have a special meeting about the plan, and submit to the Select Board afterwards.

Phil - Corrie Miller reminded Phil of the geomorphic assessment work and report that was done in 2007 and 2008 and did a corridor management plan (pre-Irene). Reports highlighted the reach of the river that includes the Tardy property and is particularly dynamic. Phil reviewed the plan. Important info in those reports for the WCC to consider regarding management plans for Tardy.

Assessment of Conservation Commission Functioning – All

James, Phil, Chris - overall the WCC works very well.

Constructive comments:

- Map showing properties of interest at meetings so all members and public know what and where is being discussed;
- Shared drive space to share documents;
- High level expectations communicated to new Board members

Thanks to Curt's work running and organizing the meeting! Unanimous agreement!

Phil noted lack of diversity of Board members.

Financial Matters – Bruno

Not seeing money coming out of the General Fund regarding the below invoices. Bruno will meet to determine what is going on.

- \$1500 surveyor
- \$1300 for Wood and Wood signs
- \$560.92 Intervale
- \$320 Mad River Path.

Request to approve an invoice for \$50 to rent space at the Big Picture.

MOTION to APPROVE by Huffman, SECONDED BY Donaldson. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

Phil - Financial matter that relates to Tardy. Recap - VLT is the recipient of funds from private fundraiser and a MOA between VLT and Waitsfield Select Board is being established to create a stewardship reserve fund with those funds. That MOA is in final draft form and up for Select Board final approval and signature. Final tally of private funds is just under \$49000.

Other Business (10 min +/-) – 7:50

- Next meeting: 5/15/23 and at 6:30 pm
- Scrag trail work contract - James
 - Thanks to Curt for going before the recent Select Board meeting on the Scrag Trail contract and project. Select Board approved trail work with Apex Trail Works out of Braintree, VT. Contract is slated to start after July 1st (60 day contract) and project is expected to be completed in approximately 30 days weather permitting. Deposit of 20% required once contract is signed.
- Northfield knotweed meeting and grant opportunity - Curt
 - Curt asked by Norwich University folks to share Waitsfield knotweed efforts. Well attended meeting over in Norwich. Norwich may be able to apply for ARPA funds for water quality projects. WCC may be able to leverage ARPA funds.
 - Curt met with Bryan Voigt working with Central VT RPC and Tardy management work could be funded through the RPC and Friends of the Mad River could be involved.

Adjourn

MOTION to ADJOURN by Huffman, SECONDED BY Donaldson. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.