

Town of Waitsfield Conservation Commission

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2023

6:30 PM Waitsfield Town offices and Via Zoom

Members Present: Lindberg, Laferriere, Grimaldi, Joslin, Loomis, Cook, Donaldson, O'Keefe

Members Absent: Huffman

Members of the public present: None

Lindberg opens the meeting at 6:35 PM

1. Welcome and review agenda – no suggested changes
2. Public input: None
3. Review and approve minutes of 7/17 meeting
 - a. MOTION by Laferriere, seconded by Cook to approve the minutes.
Discussion – Grimaldi notes a needed correction in section 3.c. change date to 7/6.
Loomis notes that the minutes include portions of an earlier meeting after the actual minutes - this should be removed.
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY with the edits noted above.
4. Election of Secretary –
 - a. O'Keefe offers to be nominated for the position.
Discussion
MOTION by Joslin to nominate and elect O'Keefe for the position, seconded by Laferriere. Discussion.
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
5. Scrag Trail Project Update.
 - a. Donaldson provides an update on the project. Contractor work is complete on Phase 1. The work was inspected by Donaldson, Loomis and Cook and considered acceptable. Contractor payment has been made and is complete.
 - b. Next Steps
 - i. Decide when to open the trail to the public
 - ii. Trail opening event
Discussion of timing of trail opening
 - iii. Press release – VR and FPF trail construction progress
 - iv. Trail tags with WCC logo

Discussion

- v. Decision made to formally open the trail in the spring after mud season
- vi. Phase II planning
- vii. Maintenance of all trails, particularly items in the lower elevation and VYCC trail (footpath)

Discussion - additional need for excavator work? \$4,000 estimate from Apex Trail works (Phase 1 contractor) to ditch, drain and clean waterbars on the older trails below the upper waterfall. Cook estimates 8 hours of hand work to take care of immediate maintenance needs.

Decision made to focus on hand work and volunteer effort on the problem spots. Discussion of additional signage on the new trail segments

All that have inspected the work agree that the Apex trail work was very well done.

- viii. Phase 2 – likely 2025 construction based on need to develop an RFP and secure funding.

6. Invasive Species Update

- a. Lindberg provides an update on the grant funding availability. No funds available for invasive species grants due to funds being directed to flood cleanup.
- b. UVM field naturalist program will be performing a MRV wide invasives effort in 2024
- c. Provides a report on the UVM intern final work product from 2023
- d. Discussion of knotweed in the valley in general and specific locations

7. Farley Riverside Park

- a. Lindberg provides an update. SB and Brian Shupe working to secure a landscape architect.
- b. Lindberg notes the useful map of the parcel produced by the UVM interns

8. Fall Planting plans

- a. Lindberg provides an update on the potential locations to plant an additional 150 stems of bare root stock between Austin, Lareau and Farley. This would cost \$1,489 in materials to be purchased from the Intervale Center.
MOTION by Donaldson, seconded by O’Keefe to approve spending \$1,489 for 150 stems of bare root stock to be purchased from the Intervale Center for fall planting.
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Vermont Master Naturalist Volunteers project

O’Keefe is enrolled in the program. Will provide 20 volunteer hours in the MRV.

Discussion of potential interpretive sign effort at Scrag, based on special features and activities such as the timber harvest and maple sugaring.

10. Financial Matters

Grimaldi provides an update.

Fund 26 monies currently invested in CG which will mature and then be re-invested after paying back Fund 23 for expenditures on Scrag Mt. Town forest.

Fund 41 (Invasive Species Reserve Fund) is below 0 balance, awaiting promised donation which will be used to replenish the account and pay back borrowed funds.

11. Other Business

a. Next Meeting – 10/16/23 at 6:30 PM

b. Bear Initiative - Cook provides an update

12. Executive Session-

MOTION by O’Keefe, seconded by Cook to go into executive session to discuss a contract matter. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commission goes into Executive session at 7:45 PM with Town Administrator and Selectboard Members Christine Sullivan and Fred Messer joining.

WCC comes out of Executive Session at 9:45 PM with the following action:

MOTION by Joslin, seconded by Grimaldi to recommend to the Selectboard that an additional \$1,500 be paid to Short Surveying Inc for services rendered, for a total of \$6,000 for any and all services related to the signed proposal dated 1/5/23.

MOTION APPROVED, with Loomis voting OPPOSED.

MOTION to adjourn by Donaldson, seconded by Joslin. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 9:48

Respectfully submitted, Chris Loomis, acting secretary.