

DRAFT  
Town of Waitsfield  
Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
June 17, 2019

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

Public present: Lisa Coyle, Charley Burbank

Meeting called to order at 6:36

1. Huffman suggests switching the order of the agenda to discuss item 5 prior to item 4. All agree. No other changes to agenda.

2. Public Input – Charley Burbank is in attendance to listen and potentially participate in the discussion of Item 5, potential conservation of 72-acre parcel owned by his uncle Donny Joslyn. Lisa Coyle is in attendance to listen to the discussion of Item 4, Scrag Mtn Town Forest. No other input.

3. MOTION to accept the minutes of the 5/20/19 meeting as drafted. Moved by Lindberg, seconded by Laferriere. MOTION APPROVED unanimously.

5. Discussion of the document submitted in writing by Charley Burbank stating that Don Joslyn wishes to conserve his 72 acre property on the Common Road. This hand-written document was scanned and circulated to the Conservation Commission (CC or WCC) and the Selectboard prior to the meeting. Burbank is invited to the table to engage in discussion.

- Burbank details his thinking on the development potential of the property.
- Laferriere and Joslin help to guide the conversation with Burbank
- Lindberg asks about the Power of Attorney status that Burbank claims regarding Don Joslyn's affairs.
- Lindberg asks a general question about the subject property's position with regards to conservation priorities within the town.
- Huffman provides a description of the property:
  - 72 acres
  - 200' of road frontage on Common Road
  - 3.5 acre meadow, remainder in woodland
  - rises from west to east, with elevation range of 1,110' - 1540'
  - Agency of Natural Resources online atlas shows the softwood portion of the property as Deer Wintering Area
  - Part of a habitat block with relatively high scores in the ANR Atlas indicating the high value of the block from a wildlife perspective due to its size and lack of fragmentation by development.
  - stony soils (Colonel Fine Sandy Loam and Peru Fine Sandy Loam), presumed to have some small forested wetlands at lower end of property but no blue line streams or surface water

- Burbank says Zoning Administrator says zoned for 1 acre lots (but minimum lot size relies on appropriate frontage)
- does not border existing conserved lands
- Burbank provides an historical perspective on Joslyn's ownership of the parcel
- Laferriere asks if Joslyn is hoping to sell a conservation easement, Burbank responds YES
- Laferriere asks if Joslyn would then sell the land subject to an easement, Burbank responds NO
- Joslin asks if the money from sale of the property or easement would go to Don Joslyn's elder care or to fixing up the farm. Burbank responds that it's for Don's care.
- Lindberg asks for a synopsis of the process of selling an easement. Huffman provides a synopsis of the process.
- Laferriere asks that the CC take time to learn more about the process and then get back to Burbank by phone. Specifically to learn what it would mean for the Town to "be a sponsor" of a proposal to VHCB as Burbank suggests in his document and verbally in conversation.
- Huffman asks Burbank to describe what exactly he is proposing. Burbank describes the property, its significance for conservation and that he wants the town to "sponsor the easement".
- Loomis explains to Burbank that he has not yet provided a proposal that the WCC can take action on and instead has used his time at this and previous meetings to complain about the WCC, specific members of the WCC, and the Vermont Land Trust.
- Discussion of the WCC's current responsibilities for stewarding other properties for which the Town of Waitsfield is an easement holder.

#### 4. Scrag Mt. Town Forest

- Huffman notes that County Forester Dan Singleton will attend the WCC 7/15 meeting to present the draft updated forest stewardship plan for the Gateway Parcel.
- Boundary Marking
  - Cook circulates the final estimate from McCain consulting to blaze and paint the boundary line between the Saffan property and the Gateway parcel. This is the recently surveyed boundary line that has only corner pins and no markings on the actual line locations. The quoted price is \$1,900.
- MOTION – By Joslin, seconded by Lindberg – That the WCC invest \$1,900 in moving forward with contract with McCain to fully blaze the boundary line between lands of Saffan and the Town with the understanding that the Chair will reach out to Saffan regarding the possibility of sharing the costs.
- MOTION APPROVED unanimously
- Discussion of appropriate boundary paint. Cook will determine what McCain intends to use for paint to be sure it's appropriate for long-term durability.
- Trail Maintenance – Cook notes that the area from the upper waterfall to the parking lot needs work to clean up trees and branches in the trail.
- Discussion of debris in the stream upstream of the footbridge built by VYCC.
- Discussion of the need to clean out waterbars that have been compromised
- Discussion of the tracks from motorized vehicles noted between the upper and lower waterfalls.
- Laferriere notes that the WCC should be budgeting funds for trail maintenance of this nature.

- Many thanks from around the table to Cook for his ongoing efforts at Scrag Mtn. Forest.
- Further discussion of maintenance of existing trails
  - Potential for volunteer effort to do trail maintenance
  - Discussion around hiring professionals to do the maintenance under a contract scenario
  - Work on a longer-term maintenance agreement
  - Potential for Mad River Path Association to help out?
  - ACTION ITEM - A group of WCC members will meet on site on 6/23 at 2:00 PM to do trail maintenance. Includes Huffman, Grimaldi, Joslin and Lindberg
- Map – No news
- Monti Road Neighbors – Grimaldi and Laferriere will send another letter soon and offer to meet neighbors on site in July.

## 6. Wu Ledges Town Forest

- Kiosks
  - Location(s): there are three planned locations for the kiosks. One on Pine Hill Lane and 2 on Hastings Meadow where the trail easements intersect with the developed road (one of which will be within the parking area envelope).
  - ACTION ITEM – Loomis will meet with landowners Phil Sweet and Jon Jamieson to finalize the location of the minor kiosk at Pine Hill lane. At the same visit, explore the possibility of a seasonal location for the existing NO PARKING sign on the north side of the driveway. Ideally this would increase exposure / visibility and be moveable to prevent damage from snow plowing.
  - Kiosk map
    - Cook expresses concern that the map orientation may be confusing to users. Suggests rotating the map notations. Discussion
    - Discussion of final sign copy and iconography. Idea surfaces to truncate map copy to accommodate the additional icons desired.
    - ACTION ITEM – Cook will ask sign designer to address the suggested idea above.
  - Landowner sign-off still needed to complete the permitting for the two Kiosks at Hastings Meadow. Discussion of landowner references on the kiosks. Minor kiosks throughout the valley have no specific references to individual property owners, rather private property owners are appreciated by reference as a group.
  - MRVPD is working to finalize this round of kiosks by the end of the month
  - ACTION ITEM – Working group will work to finalize sign copy and get landowner approval. Huffman, Laferriere, Cook and Loomis.
- Trail Maintenance – no news.
- Haskin Parcel – no news

## 7. Austin Parcel – recap of 6/1/19 stewardship day and next steps

- Grimaldi provides a report on the Stewardship day

- Reports that 20+/- volunteers were present.
- Volunteers not particularly interested in the educational component
- Plantings from fall 2018 look healthy and stable
- Accomplished the planting of approximately 200 new stems
- Additional Japanese knotweed cutting was done and the cuttings were moved to the “burrito” wrap for disposal.

-The Commission recognizes member and Invasives Working Group lead Mark Haberle for his good work on the 6/2/19 walk on the Mad River Path, telling the story and rationale for the CC’s work on the Austin parcel. This was reported to be the “Highlight of the outing”. Kudos Mark!

8. Tour of Commission’s records in lister’s office: Deferred to a later meeting due to time constraints.

9. Status of Current Funds and Recap of Expenditures Approved in Current Session

-Grimaldi provides a Financial Report. Discussion of the status of various funds accessible to the WCC. A report showing the status of funds is circulated to the members.

- FY’19 Appropriation has been added into the Restroom Recreation and Conservation fund as expected.

- Scrag Mt. Town Forest Stewardship fund discussion. The funds are in a Certificate of Deposit which will mature on 11/19/19.

-Recap of Expenditures approved in current session.

- \$1,900 approved for Item #4 – boundary marking on Scrag Gateway Parcel. Account to be used for payment To Be Determined at next regular meeting.

10. Other business

- Next meetings 7/15/19 and 8/19/19

11. MOTION by Grimaldi, seconded by Lindberg to go into Executive Session to discuss possible real estate transactions. MOTION APPROVED unanimously.

CC goes into executive session at 9:13

MOTION by Laferriere, seconded by Joslin to come out of executive session. MOTION APPROVED unanimously. CC comes out of executive session at 9:53 with the following action to be taken:

CC authorizes Laferriere, Joslin and Huffman to work with Liza Walker of the VLT to prepare a follow-up communication with potential landowner of interest.

MOTION by Laferriere, seconded by Lindberg, to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:54