

Town of Waitsfield Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2023

6:30 PM Via Zoom

Members Present: Huffman, Lindberg, Grimaldi, Joslin, Loomis, Cook

Members Absent: Laferriere, Donaldson, Telep

Lindberg opens the meeting at 6:40 PM

1. Welcome and review agenda – no suggested changes
2. No public in attendance – no public input

Cook Joins at 6:45 PM

3. Review and approve minutes of the January 16 meeting. MOTION TO APPROVE by Huffman

Discussion – Need a volunteer to take the minutes in Telep's absence – Loomis agrees to take the minutes.

Discussion -

- a. Edits to minutes – Grimaldi – January 16 meeting.
 - b. Discussion – hold off on approving the minutes because of the 5 members present, only 2 were present at the January 16 meeting. Decision made to wait till March meeting for review and approval of the minutes.
4. Tri-Town CC Meeting – recap.
 - a. Lindberg provides a quick synopsis of the meeting: Wildlife Corridor Community Meeting, Ideas for MRV Biodiversity Series, and Further Tri-Town meeting plans.
 - b. Huffman followed up with description of the Wildlife Corridor Community meeting and some highlights.
 - i. Lots of Q&A between the audience and presenters
 - ii. Well attended and successful
 - iii. Ideation around engaging more residents and landowners
 - iv. Ideas for including some of the concepts discussed into town planning
 - c. MRV Biodiversity series

- i. Lindberg surfaces the idea of providing content ideas for the MRV Biodiversity Series – For instance: conservation easements and potential for long-term land protection – VLT, TPL, NEWT potential presenters
- d. Grimaldi – three towns only with no special guests – mid-March to mid - April timing.

Discussion

5. Invasive species report:

- a. Lindberg reports – Selectboard approved grant application for State F&W grant. \$9,900 request.
- b. 16 applicants for summer intern positions within the three - town program.
- c. Continues investigation of biodegradable alternatives to some of the mat material currently being utilized for knotweed control.

Discussion

6. Tardy Property Management Plan update:

- a. Huffman provides an update of the draft management plan for the Tardy Parcel. A draft annotated outline was circulated and feedback received.
- b. Huffman looking to prepare a full draft plan prior to March 20 meeting. Likely need to do some public outreach between draft and final plan. Selectboard would approve the plan, with VLT adding additional approval / acceptance.
- c. How to orchestrate all the necessary elements in as timely fashion as possible.
Liza Walker joins the meeting

Discussion of logistics and re-naming of the property as the Virginia Farley Riverside Park and celebration to commemorate the opening.

- d. Walker provides an update on the funding established to – date. Provides a synopsis of the Memorandum of Understanding between the town and the fund raising and implementation entity (Friends of the Virginia Farley Riverside Park). Provides support for the project and specifics regarding VLT oversight. Request for ARPA funding from the group – no news on this request yet.

Discussion of the draft outline and timing issues. Knotweed issues – how to work this site into the existing knotweed effort? Does a management plan need to be in place prior to knotweed work this spring?

Discussion - decision to perform knotweed mitigation in parallel with the management planning as the knotweed work has already been planned for the Tardy parcel. Lindberg and Cook will work on including Tardy into the spring plan for invasives. April-May work load will require volunteer effort.

Discussion regarding primary responsibility for maintenance.

7. Financial Matters – Grimaldi provides an update on the funds available to the WCC. Only changes were due to interest. Pending invoices yet to be reflected in the funds.
Deposit paid to Tim Short for surveying contract was deposited.
8. Wu Ledges – Loomis reports on the status of signage and Invoice . MOTION by Joslin, seconded by Grimaldi to pay the Invoice for signage to Wood and Wood signs, Inc in the amount of \$1,300 to be paid from the WCC FY'23 operating funds. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

ACTION ITEM - Loomis will forward the invoice to Grimaldi for payment handling.

Cook notes the plowing at Hastings road is incomplete with regards to the parking area.

Cook notes Scrag dog walking has gotten out of control. Dog walkers presenting a problem by not picking up dog waste.

Discussion around Wu Ledges and Hastings road access – Curt will reach out to the town administrator to determine the current situation.

Dog waste discussion – potential for collaboration among towns and stewardship entities. Is Steward MRV the conduit?

9. Other business:
 - a. Next meetings 3/20/23 and 4/17/23.
 - b. Return to In-person or hybrid meeting format
 - c. Scrag trail work contract.

MOTION by Loomis, seconded by Huffman, to go into executive session to discuss a real estate item and to include Liza Walker in the session. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

10. The Commission goes into Executive Session at 8:01

MOTION by Joslin, seconded by Grimaldi , to come out of executive session with no action taken.
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

WCC comes out of executive session at 8:12 PM

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

Adjourn: 8:13 PM

Respectfully submitted, Chris Loomis, acting secretary.