



Conservation Commission

Meeting of November 14, 2023

Present: Anna Black, Marcy Blauvelt, Billy Vigdor, Mark Bard (Select board), Stacey Lambert (zoom), Marty Johansen, Amy Marshall-Carney

Absent: Meg Baldor, Kelsey Applegate

Public: None

• **Agenda Modification**

- The agenda was modified to include a discussion by Mike Bard, Select Board liaison to the WCC.
- Mike suggested that the WCC members (one or several) appear occasionally at Select Board meetings. This would allow a two-way flow of information between SB and WCC; the WCC can also give a status report.
- One suggestion is that the WCC appear to discuss the Bylaws project (see below). It is possible this could occur in December but the SB calendar is filled up in January. One comment indicated that we need to be prepared or have questions ready to appear at a SB meeting.

• **Approval of Minutes**

- Billy presented the October minutes, noting that there was no quorum suggested the minutes be approved for record keeping purposes. Amy moved and Marty seconded a motion to approve the October 2023 minutes without change. The Commission approved the minutes 6-0.
- Stacey moved and Amy seconded a motion to approve the August 2023 minutes without change.
- Billy will inform Karen.

• **Introductions**

- As there has been new members (Marcy and Anna), the Commission introduced themselves.
- There was a discussion of quorum requirements, whether the Commission required warnings of meetings with less than five commissioners and attendance at meetings of the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership (Partnership). It was noted that the Commission has received advice and warns meetings with five or more commissioners because the bylaws of the WCC indicate that there are nine commissioners. Five make a quorum. Billy was going to check with Karen Petrovic regarding the quorum requirement.

- Also, it was discussed that attendance by five or more commissioners at a Partnership meeting would require a warning. However, there has never been a Partnership meeting in the last four years (perhaps longer) at which five or more commissioners have attended. It was discussed whether WCC members could have different roles and, as such, attendance at such meetings would not count toward a quorum. In the past, the WCC has taken the position that if five or more commissioners appearing at a Partnership meeting would require a quorum.
- **Sub Committees**
 - Billy gave an overview of the overall project, discussing its origination and three parts. This included a discussion of the significance of the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor (the Corridor), including the science, habitat and vegetation. There was a discussion regarding the timing and how this project fit with the Planning Commission work. As the Planning Commission (PC) will address updated zoning regulations (or bylaws) outside to the north of I-89 and within the Corridor (Phase 2), it would be helpful to have proposed language available when the Planning Commission works on Phase 2. There was some discussion of advising the Development Review Board and Planning Commission regarding the importance to protect the Corridor prior to the passage of the Phase 2 zoning regulations. It was suggested that the WCC could submit proposed language to be adopted as an interim bylaw. There was also a discussion of the need to keep the Select Board informed.
 - Amy presented the work and progress of the Committee working on integrating the Community Values Mapping into the Town Zoning Maps. That committee has reached out to Fish and Wildlife and Vermont Natural Resources Counsel. There was an overview of the Community Values Mapping and a discussion of the limitations on that work.
 - Amy also presented the work and progress of the Committee working on gathering data regarding the habitat and wildlife in the Corridor. The group identified some inconsistencies in Town maps and it was highlighted that such information should be communicated to the Select Board. There was also a question of whether the WCC would need a budget.
 - At the current time, the subcommittee was not sure if it needed additional resources and if additional funds were to be necessary, the WCC would ask for such funds at that time. It is possible to look into grants.
 - Billy gave an overview of the structure of the zoning regulations. A memo was circulated to the group.
- **Motion to Approve the Project as a Commission Priority**
 - Anna moved and Amy seconded a motion to approve the above project as a priority of the WCC. The motion passed 6-0.
- **Website Hosting Contract**
 - Billy explained that the WCC has been paying for web hosting but the WCC has not had the time or resources to build out the website or maintain it. The Commission voted 6-0 not to continue the contract.
- **Parks Steering Committee Update**

- Billy updated the WCC on work vegetating the floodplain along Thatcher Brook in Hope Davey Park. Efforts are underway to take advantage of funding that the Friends of the Winooski were able to access and coordinating with Waterbury Recreation Department.
- **Bylaws Update**
 - Marty prepared and distributed a proposed set of WCC bylaws. He asked for comments. These will be compiled and discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Black