

WESTFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

– APRIL 15, 2026 6:00 PM –

WESTFORD TOWN OFFICE

Members present: R. Kirsten Tyler (RKT), Joel Fay (JF), Elizabeth Ploof (EP), Elias Rosenblatt (ER)

Members of the public present: Pat Haller (PH; Westford)

6:00 pm: Meeting called to order

6:00 pm: Review and Approval of March meeting minutes – JF moved, ER seconded, motion passed with unanimous support

6:00 pm: Changes to Agenda –RKT wishes to add the following, with no objections:

- Update WCC on efforts from Vermont League of Cities and Towns to create a common trail maintenance policy document
- Beaver deceiver maintenance from the SB
- Milton BioBlitz
- Bird-a-thon for 2027

6:03 pm: Public Comment – PH voiced outstanding support for the Westford Conservation Commission and all town volunteers for their efforts.

6:08 pm: UVM Capstone Project Updates (RKT and PH)

UVM class gave similar presentation to SB that was given to WCC during the April meeting (see minutes). The UVM class wants to present at the next SB meeting (4/23/26). Their presentation yielded favorable response and gives some guidance for future discussion with the town at large. There is still some uncertainty surrounding what the resiliency index will be and how it could be used, but given the expertise of the professor involved, this uncertainty will be resolved. PH mentioned that the SB asked for them to focus on 1705 use as they develop survey questions for the town. Any broader survey questions are requested to be clearly from scholarly interest from UVM students, not from a town planning perspective.

(EP) UVM students is coming to do macro and micro inverts class on May 1st with Westford Elementary School.

6:15 pm: Watershed Grant - Grant was awarded, was focused on education and outreach opportunities focused on the river. This could be used for resources for Westford Elementary students for classroom materials, and other public facing outreach materials. (RKT) WCC can serve in a coordination role but to would be helpful to foster partnership opportunities between UVM students/classes and Westford Elementary School Curriculum, as an example. (PH) Potential partnership with the Vermont River Conservancy to contract outreach help, and WCC could explore potential match funding with an NGO like VRC. (EP) There should be coordination between WES and UVM student help as modules are established for the fall. (EP) Perhaps funds could be used to provide kits for families to explore stream science, to be checked out from the library.

Action Items: Contact VT River Conservancy (PH to provide contact information). EP will look into module planning for next year and will contact Kurt Sherman about data and equipment from prior classwork on the river.

6:38pm: Disc Golf – Tabled - Tommy will come with information when he has it.

6:38pm: Legal Trail Document Review - RKT has been speaking with the chair of the Trail Committee from Tunbridge. They did not have a trail maintenance policy. RKT found that there are not any other good examples of trail maintenance policies. Common trail maintenance policy document is about to be released from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. This may provide some framing and language that would be helpful for the Westford legal trail documentation.

PH: Uncertainty about how we notify residents along trails about maintenance. Start discussion about maintenance frequency.

RKT: Tunbridge trail committee - whenever maintenance is needed, their conservation commission submits a request to the SB. Upon approval, the SB notifies the landowner about scheduled, routine maintenance.

PH: Want to avoid having to notify multiple landowners. Should be a public posted

notice about trail and several weather dependent options for dates. Broader picture:
We have to start somewhere.

ER: We need clear property line markers PH: Maybe owners who want to do maintenance can mark their boundary on the trail with a sign (trail maintained by property owner).

7:01pm Beaver Deceiver: Maintenance needs to be organized.

It was just installed. Concerns were expressed about who would maintain it. PH is asking WCC to maintain drainage. ER and EP volunteered to take on maintenance.

7:10pm: Maple Shade date with WNRCD – May 13th 9-12am JF and ER can go.
Meeting to see if we can access funding for improving drainage on trail network.

7:15 - Other business

Newsletter - mud season & trails, sweatshirts, farmers market, ticks

7:23PM- Adjourn