WESTFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

– September 16, 2026 6:00 PM –

WESTFORD TOWN OFFICE

Members present - R Kirsten Tyler (RKT), Elizabeth Ploof (EP), Elias Rosenblatt (ER)
Public present - Kati Anderson

6:00 PM:

- Review and approval of August meeting minutes
  RKT approved, EP seconded, unanimous approval
- Changes to agenda
  - RKT has updates from conversations with Kyle Buck
  - Seymour complaint
  - Budget discussions focus on FY2027, not FY2028

6:05 PM:

- Public comment
- Kati Anderson reiterating that temporary closure during hunting season is greatly beneficial for town-landowner relationships, common practice in other towns, and understands about slippery slopes and voiced that this could be a productive step forward.

6:10 PM:

- UVM service learning class update
  - Students will use the resilience model as a cookbook where the user could add aspects of services, changing land cover and understand impacts on the town
  - For example, flood risk: flood risk hazard can be modified with future climate predictions, and the model can predict where vulnerabilities appear.
  - State is working on a municipal resilience index, so this is perfect timing
  - Students are very excited to focus on this deliverable
  - Still planning to visit town lands on Wednesday 23rd, arriving at 2pm, walk maple shade and school trails, and if there is time, end at Common with knotweed
  - EP to speak about connecting with WES students
- Use of watershed grant outreach funds to host a seminar series focused on the River
  - EP to move forward with building a cart to purchase educational supplies with coordination with the town
  - Public outreach component moving towards broader watershed topics, rather than the original 1705 focus as the Planning Commission is handling this.
    - A 3-speaker series, with the broad overarching theme of “Our healthy watershed”

- Focus on components of watershed to keep healthy (rivers, streams, wetlands, riparian forests - bring in UVM faculty, VTFWD experts
- Perhaps connect with Dan from WNRCD to help facilitating speakers as a partner organization?
- ER suggests adding a hydrologist or a flood mitigation expert, focused on flood risk in Westford
- How to spend the outreach funds? Perhaps state folks are paid to do outreach, so perhaps cushioning with snacks for public to boost attendance.
- Perhaps funding opportunities in MERP? There is $2k funding opportunities for outreach related to energy/resilience. Discussed leveraging these funds for two information signs at key ecosystem areas on school trails or MSTF.
- EP emphasized including all ages in these outreach efforts
- UVM class could be fourth event, perhaps end of the fall semester
- Speaker series tentatively scheduled for Wednesday evenings in January (6^{th}, 13^{th}, 27^{th}; 20^{th} as backup)
- RKT to contact UVM and WNRCD
- ER to contact FRP and FWD outreach folks
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- Initial discussion of FY 2027 budget proposal
  - Level funding request is $2500
  - Meeting with SB on October 8th
  - RKT makes a motion to present a budget proposal with level funding to the SB, with a note that we expect to ask for additional funding if needed for resuming trail maintenance on ROW trails. ER seconded, unanimous approval.
- Discuss restoration work required on ROW trails following pause in maintenance - to be continued.
- REDI grant RFP for trail work - Tabled until October, with other trail grants
- Trail conditions and maintenance updates

- ER to email JF to get the vests up!

- Seymour complaint - On the Seymour Rd side, there was a stolen car parked on the trail with paraphernalia reported by a trail user. The town is going to involve the State Police about the recent complaint.

- RKT asked for clarifying location, landowner correspondence, and if this could be related with other activity on the trail. Follow up conversation with the Selectboard so that they are aware and follow through with contacting law enforcement. RKT to follow-up.

<u>7:15 PM:</u> - Other business

· Newsletter items - Hunting season, second treatment for Japanese knotweed took place.

6:55 PM: Executive session - tabled.

7:20 PM: ER moved to adjourn, EP seconded, unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned.