

**Town of Williston Conservation Commission (WCC)**  
**Minutes of Aug 17, 2016**

**Approved**

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<b>Members Present:</b>	Jude Hersey, Eric Howe, Jean Kissner, Kim Coleman
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Carl Runge, Gary Hawley, Anthony Jordick
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Melinda Scott, Daniel Kelly
<b>Others Present:</b>	Esther Lotsch, Brian Bertsch, Al Senecal

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1. **Call to Order:** Jude called the meeting to order at 7:05 AM.
  
2. **Public Comment:** None.
  
3. **Approval of Minutes from July 21, 2016 and August 10, 2016:** Jean made a motion to approve the minutes of July 21 as written, Eric seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 4-0 vote. Jean made a motion to approve the minutes of August 10 as written, Eric seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 4-0 vote.
  
4. **Site Plan Review – – DP 16-05 Cottonwood Crossing:** Brian Bertsch and Al Senecal gave an overview of the project. They are seeking approval for Phase 1, which includes both residential and commercial buildings in the southeast corner of the property. Jude asked about their overall timeframe for the project. Brian stated it depends on the growth management allocation for the different phases. The residential allocation they currently have goes through 2018. This is one of the last projects in the growth center, and the project received a very high score, so they expect to get allocation for the next round of growth management. They anticipate it taking 3-5 years to build out the whole project. In addition to the buildings they are proposing to construct the main thruway (Connor Way) and the central square. They are proposing 173 housing units, which is in line with goals of the Town and the State to increase density in the growth centers. Housing units to the north near Maple Tree Place are more like townhomes, changed from original design in response to community feedback. Multifamily buildings are proposed to the south, away from Maple Tree Place. The Connor Way will separate the mixed use from the residential units (north/south). Jude asked about the size of the units – Al Senecal responded that the largest will be 2 bedrooms. Kim asked about the orientation of the recreation path. Brian stated it will be along Route 2 and then skirt around the wetland at the edge of the parking lot. They are also proposing a walking path around the detention pond (gravel), and a path around the parking lot (paved). Eric asked about the stormwater pond, and whether it would be designed to handle all the stormwater from the development. Brian stated that yes, it will, and that they designed it to serve an aesthetic and recreational purpose with the walking path around it. Eric asked what the capacity will be, and Brian stated it is designed to hold a 10-year storm, maybe 100-year storm depending on the total acreage

of impervious surface. The State regulations require that for under 10 acres you must design for a 10-year storm, and for over 10 acres you need to design for a 100-year storm. Eric said they should look at more on-site options to increase infiltration across the whole project. They are planning some rain gardens that will also and serve a dual purpose of pocket parks. All the roads within the development will be private. There are no Class 2 wetlands on the parcel, but a few Class 3 wetlands that were formed from the gas yard, not natural. There will be multiple small areas for snow storage, and plan is for snow to periodically be carried off site as needed. Al Senecal asked about the Burr Oaks and what their significance is – Melinda stated it's a rare community in Vermont, which the Town recognizes as a designated conservation area. Al Senecal stated that there are a few small Burr Oaks on the property that could be transplanted and/or preserved. The core Burr Oak community is not within the parcel and will be unaffected by the project. Eric moved to approve the staff notes findings and recommendations as amended, with one recommendation added to look for opportunities for more onsite stormwater infiltration. Jude seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 4-0 vote.

5. **Discussion of WCC Chair/Vice Chair positions:** Tabled for the next meeting.
6. **Allen Brook footbridge update:** Last weekend's volunteer work day on Sunday was a huge success. Over a dozen people showed up and worked very hard all day, and the bridge was mostly completed by day's end. On Monday the bridge and puncheon were completed with the help of the Winooski Valley Park District. The total cost of labor and materials was under \$3,000.
7. **Fall Grants – Potential Projects:** A number of grants are coming up in the fall and winter. This year Melinda stated she wants to be prepared to write several grants and has been starting to think about potential projects. She has been talking with Dan Schmidt of VYCC about potential water quality projects, and has been honing in on a few high priority projects in the Town Wide Stormwater Master Plan. In the Muddy Brook watershed, in the Harvest Lane/Marshall Ave area there are a few projects of interest that seem suitable for a VYCC crew to work on. Another project of interest is developing an interpretive panel for the beaver pond and Allen Brook bridge replacement, as a way of educating the public about beaver activity and best management practices. Melinda will continue to think of potential projects for grant applications and bring them to the WCC for their consideration at upcoming meetings.
8. **Dan's project report –** Dan gave an overview on his independent project. There is not much purple loosestrife but there is a lot of Phragmites around the stormwater ponds. The transition from dry to wet ponds will probably lessen the amount of Phragmites, but may

increase invasives in the areas where they can grow. Phragmites can't really grow in water. Dan noted that cattails can act like an invasive species in the way they tend to dominate, but they can also suppress Phragmites. Stormwater ponds have very limited biodiversity. Jude asked how you can get rid of Phragmites – Dan stated that you normally cut and then spray with herbicide. Treatments need to be repeated over years. Kim asked whether Phragmites provided any benefit. Dan stated that the stalks can become a problem for the functioning of the pond itself as biomass accumulates.

## 9. Staff Report/Other Business

- **Trails and Parks –**
  - Jude asked about the poison parsnip and the discussion on Front Porch Forum. Whose responsibility it is to remove it? Melinda stated that it is virtually impossible to eliminate it, as it is so prolific. Kim stated it would be best to concentrate efforts around areas where it is most detrimental, such as along the recreation path. Melinda stated that it is likely not something the DPW would take on, and she cautioned against the WCC taking the lead on it as well. Any attempts to remove it would need to be a community effort.
  - Melinda and Dan have re-posted the boundaries of Sucker Brook Hollow Country Park and Five Tree Hill Country Park. Melinda will continue the boundary posting this fall.
- **Youthbuild workday scheduled** – Another workday has been scheduled with Youthbuild for September 23. Melinda plans to have them work on finishing the Mud Pond boardwalk.
- **Farewell Daniel** – the Conservation Commission members thanked Daniel for his service and wished him well.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:21 am.

Minutes Submitted by Melinda Scott: September 7.

Approved by WCC: September 7.