

**Town of Williston Conservation Commission (WCC)  
Minutes of November 16 2016**

**Approved**

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<b>Members Present:</b>	Jude Hersey, Kim Coleman, Eric Howe, Carl Runge, Jean Kissner
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Gary Hawley, Anthony Jordick
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Melinda Scott
<b>Others Present:</b>	Pat Suozzi (LIA), Jamie Carroll (LIA), Rita Dessau (WVPD), Nick Warner (WVPD)

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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 November 2, 2016:** Tabled until the next meeting due to lack of quorum.
  
4. **Lake Iroquois Association Annual Report:** Pat Suozzi from the Lake Iroquois Association (LIA) introduced herself and stated they were making their annual presentations to Conservation Commissions and Selectboards. The LIA’s annual activities include the Lake Greeter program and monitoring of Lake Iroquois and tributaries through the LaRosa partnership, which has been suspended this year because they have good baseline data and have done a lot of remediation of nutrient releases, but will be resumed next year to see the potential effects of the remediation work. The LIA has also been involved with riparian restoration efforts in the watershed. Three lakeshore properties have received the Lakewise award from DEC, and a fourth is being considered. They received a grant from Lake Champlain Basin Program to create a boat washing station. They submitted an Ecosystem Restoration Program grant to remediate stormwater near one of the lake’s tributaries. They also received a grant from DEC for invasive milfoil control. They are using the grant to implement various means of control including herbicidal and mechanical. They are working with local schools to get students involved doing projects – for example, the eighth grade challenge and Champlain Valley Union high school community service projects. Their big focus is on milfoil control and they have been moving forward with educational outreach and suction harvesting. The LIA held two workshops this past summer. They are doing private fundraising, grant writing, and soliciting funding from Towns. They are asking the Williston Selectboard for \$25,000 to match private donations they are anticipated to secure. Jamie Carroll introduced himself and gave an overview of the milfoil control project. Currently 70 acres of Lake Iroquois are infested with milfoil, and it is projected it could grow to 100 acres. They want to restore recreational uses of lake and allow native plants to return. The LIA hired a contractor last summer to do suction harvesting, and he was able to remove half of the milfoil in 10 days at a cost of \$10,000. They have applied for a DEC permit to use the herbicide Sonar next summer to control

milfoil. This will be a whole lake treatment done three times over the course of the summer. Toxicity of Sonar is considered very low for fish and for humans, and does not concentrate the way heavy metals do. Eric mentioned there is a concern about toxicity to plants, although Sonar is known to be pretty specific to milfoil. Carl asked whether the milfoil has any effect on fish populations. Jamie stated that it can impede swimming ability of fish, although fish also use it to hide in along the perimeters. Eric asked about a long-term plan, would the treatments eventually be downgraded to a maintenance level. Jamie stated the goal would be to reduce the herbicide use to a minimum level over time. Eradication is not possible, it will need to be maintained over time. Jean asked whether they remove the dead milfoil. Pat stated it doesn't increase the nutrient levels significantly, and the total mass is not that great, so they do not remove it. Jude asked about the mowing that some lake associations do to control milfoil– is it effective? Jamie stated that there is the risk that it actually increases the density by spreading particles of milfoil around the lake. Suctioning pulls out the roots. Jean asked whether other lakes used this herbicide, and Pat stated that it has been used effectively in other lakes such as Hortonia, St Catherine, Morey, and others. Pat concluded by stating that the LIA is hoping for the Town's support, and that they have already met with the Selectboard last night.

- 5. Winooski Valley Park District Annual Report:** Nick Warner introduced himself as the Executive Director of the WVDP and gave an overview of their activities this past year. He stated that the perception of WVDP as a water quality organization has really been emphasized. Derway Island Park has been expanded this year. Valley Ridge Natural Area has been expanded, and it now encompasses 24 acres and a trail easement. They are hoping to eventually connect a trail to the Centennial Woods Natural Area. Their overall goal is to increase connectivity along the Winooski River and its tributaries. Environmental education also a big focus – some examples are the SOLE Camp, working with local colleges and Center for Technology at Essex (CTE) on park projects. Nick recommended we reach out to CTE for assistance. Nick explained some of the work done this year in Williston including Brownell Mountain scoping, Mud Pond Conservation Area boardwalk, Allen Brook Nature Trail bridge, Green Up Day. Nick reviewed the work proposed for coming year in helping with trails planning, including Chatham Woods trail, Mud Pond parking lot. Nick explained the funding formula, and stated they have been increasing the amount of funding coming from other sources so as to reduce the impact on town budgets. Operating funds need to come from steady funding streams, while capital projects can come from grants and other one-time sources. Also are using on-site programming and rental of spaces to generate income. A new Fee-For-Service model is being piloted with South Burlington this year to focus on specific projects. This is in addition to regular dues the Town pays. The contract with South Burlington is a time and materials contract, with no markup on materials but a 50% markup on labor. Melinda asked what the cost was for crew day. Nick

said he would send her a copy of the South Burlington contract. Nick reviewed the WVPD's Fair share formula and the amount Williston is being asked to contribute. He stated that relative to the WVPD's expenses the Town contribution is a lower percentage of their overall funding than in previous years. The amount requested this year represents a 4% increase even though the operating budget is increasing by 6%. The amount requested is \$31,972 for Williston. Carl asked how much income is from grants and what projects are being done with grant funding? Nick mentioned the development of the Wolcott Natural Area, funded through a Recreation Trails Grant (\$50,000), LCBP funding (\$7,300) for the SOLE Camp, LL Bean for replacing the Wetlands Walk boardwalk, and High Meadows grant for \$5,000 for long range planning. DEC Greeter Program. Carl suggested it would be helpful to include that information in annual report. Carl and Eric stated they hoped the Town could continue to support the organization. Kim mentioned the ecosystem services they provide through their water quality work. Eric stated he would also like to support the LIA's work.

## **6. Staff Report/Other Business**

- Recreation Trails Grant – Melinda stated that the Recreation Trails Preapplication is due on December 1, and is there any particular project the WCC would like to apply for? Melinda stated that the Chatham Woods/Allen Brook Nature Trail connection seemed like a high priority. Perhaps this could be combined with a renovation of the Allen Brook Boardwalk under “Allen Brook Nature Trail Improvements and Expansion.”
- Watershed Grants – Melinda stated that the Watershed Grants offered through the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife are due on December 2. The ideas she has come up with thus far are to apply for a Monitoring and Assessment grant to either hire Fitzgerald Environmental to complete a professional report for the Allen Brook monitoring data or to conduct E coli source tracking. Eric suggested riparian restoration along the Winooski River. Melinda stated that no scoping has been done that she's aware of, however the WCC could apply for a monitoring and assessment grant to do preliminary scoping.
- Mud Pond Country Park boundary survey – Melinda stated that a year ago Vermont Housing and Conservation Board had asked the Town to look into clarifying the boundaries of Mud Pond Country Park after some site visits indicated there might be an encroachment on the northwest corner of the property, and the existing survey was too poor to rely upon. Melinda stated a comprehensive survey was necessary to re-establish the boundaries, in order to satisfy the request from VHCB. She is asking if the Conservation Commission would support using ERF funds to hire an engineering firm to do the survey.

Since this cannot be decided at today's meeting due to lack of quorum, and it would be in the Town's best interest to move quickly on this, Carl suggested having an extra meeting on November 30 to discuss and vote on this matter and other matters presented at today's meeting. Melinda will propose this extra meeting to the entire Commission via email.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 am.

Minutes Submitted by Melinda Scott: November 30, 2016

Approved by WCC: November 30, 2016