

**Town of Williston Conservation Commission (WCC)
Minutes of October 19 2016**

Approved

Members Present:	Jude Hersey, Anthony Jordick, Kim Coleman, Eric Howe, Gary Hawley, Carl Runge
Members Absent:	Jean Kissner
Staff Present:	Melinda Scott
Others Present:	Deb Shelby (My Best Friend's Spa)

- 1. Call to Order:** Gary called the meeting to order at 7:05 AM.
- 2. Public Comment:** None.
- 3. Approval of Minutes from September 21, 2016 and October 5, 2016:** Carl made a motion and Jude seconded the motion to approve the Sept 21 minutes as written. Anthony made a motion and Jude seconded the motion to approve the Oct 5 minutes as written. The motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.
- 4. FY18 Budget Proposal:** Carl stated the ERF request has been reduced to \$20,000 and the operating budget increased by \$20,000, for this year only due to the large contribution to the ERF from Vermont Gas. The additional \$20,000 in the operating budget would be allocated to a new spending category - Trail Construction. The WCC discussed the budget line item for the Summer Intern. The WCC had previously discussed leaving that out of the coming year's budget with the understanding that money would be spent on a VYCC crew for trail maintenance. However, Ken had suggested leaving Intern funding in the budget with a reduction in total hours. If the money is taken out completely, it would be difficult to get it back in future years. Melinda stated that there is some flexibility as to whether we hire graduate student or undergrad, and whether we go through the Rubenstein Program or not. We may be able to fund additional intern hours through a grant. Eric asked question about mileage, and whether the amount allocated would be enough. Melinda stated she is not overly concerned about it as there is some flexibility in the overall budget. Nonetheless, we might want to consider reallocating money out of the training budget over to mileage. Gary asked about the separation traditionally between ERF and the fiscal year operating budget, and Carl stated that yes they are separate although they fall under the overall Conservation budget. Carl said we should stress this is a one year reduction in proposed ERF funding due to the substantial contribution from Vermont Gas. The current ERF balance is \$269,000 with an additional \$40,000 to be deposited soon. He stated that we should make it clear they are separate budgets and this is only a one time request. Melinda will draft a memo and send it to WCC within the next week. Jude made a motion,

and Kim seconded the motion to accept the FY 18 budget. The motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.

- 5. Site Plan Review – DP 17-05 Global Foundries 2-Lot Subdivision:** Since the owner representatives were not in attendance, although invited, Melinda asked whether the WCC wanted to move forward on discussion and review of the project. The WCC agreed to look at it as it was pretty straightforward. Gary asked about the use of the future tense in reference to the solar farm. Since it currently exists, the language should reflect that. The WCC discussed desired and existing trail connections. There are no existing formal trails and there is a desired trail connection. There is a recommendation for granting the Town a floating trail easement. Eric made a motion and Jude seconded the motion to accept the Findings and Recommendations with revisions. The motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.
- 6. Site Plan Review – DP 17-07 My Best Friends Spa:** The staff Findings and Recommendations are based on a previous site plan. Debra Shelby passed out and reviewed the revised site plan. Originally proposed was the removal of an existing structure and replacement with proposed building, but because the existing structure encroaches into the watershed protection buffer, the applicant decided to move the proposed building to the other side of the property and leave the existing structure in place. Eric asked whether the pond is natural or built, and Deb said it is a built pond. Jude asked if they are keeping both the house and the agricultural building, and Deb replied that she would definitely like to keep the house as is and possibly the agricultural building. Gary proposed moving the driveway entrance away from the wetland buffer, and Deb stated that that might be possible as a connection could be made to the building via the parking lot. That would leave two points of access but avoid impacts to the wetland buffer. Deb asked a question about the Significant Wildlife Habitat Area – the area in question is all lawn and has been for years. Melinda stated her recommendations are based on the bylaw requirements, and that the WCC can recommend to waive this requirement if they wish, but the DRB ultimately decides. Gary proposed adding the following recommendations to the WCC Findings and Recommendations: 1) All wetland buffers shall be permanently marked on the ground as well as on the final plans, 2) Where there is currently a non-conforming structure within the watershed protection buffer, cease mowing and other maintenance activities within the buffer except for a 10ft swath immediately around the existing agricultural building, allowing natural revegetation to occur; 3) To minimize wetland buffer impacts, close off the existing westernmost driveway within the wetland buffer and relocate it to the east end of the property outside the buffer. Carl asked whether there would be any entrances on the east side of the proposed building (facing the neighboring parcel). Deb stated shed didn't think so, rather the required three exits/entrances proposed are on other sides of the building. Melinda will revise the staff

notes to reflect the updated site plan, and send it to WCC and the applicant. Eric made a motion and Anthony seconded the motion to accept the Findings and Recommendations as revised.

7. Staff Report/Other Business:

- Riparian easements and ERP grant – Melinda had been considering but decided against applying for an Ecosystem Restoration Program grant this fall. If the WCC wants to continue the restoration efforts along the Allen Brook and other watersheds, more scoping and planning is needed prior to implementation. Melinda asked how the WCC feels about continuing this work, especially with regards to obtaining more riparian easements. What are the benefits of riparian easements given the Town’s current restrictive regulations? Eric stated that this is a model that has been widely supported by the State, and the Town’s regulations can change in the future, while the conservation easements guarantee permanent protection. Gary stated he is in favor of continuing this work. Obtaining easements along the Winooski River has been considered in the past and should be looked at, and WVPD might be interested in partnering in this effort. Melinda mentioned the KAS study that was done a few years back, which prioritized parcels for restoration and conservation. From this effort, there is a list of potential properties to pursue and scope out. Gary asked that Melinda develop a list of steps that should be taken in continuing this effort.
- LCBP Education and Outreach grant – Eric Howe recused himself from the discussion and left the meeting. There was some discussion about the proposed scope of the project, and Carl stated that it seemed ambitious. Carl wondered if we could get as much public support for the project as indicated in the grant. Melinda stated that word is spreading about the public walks, and there seems to be growing interest. Thirteen people came to the Isham walk. Melinda stated this is a way of getting funding to update plans that badly need updating and to do it in an appropriate, public process driven way.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 am.

Minutes Submitted by Melinda Scott: November 2

Approved by WCC: November 2