

**Town of Williston Conservation Commission (WCC)
Minutes of September 7, 2016**

Approved

Members Present:	Jude Hersey, Eric Howe, Jean Kissner, Kim Coleman, Gary Hawley, Anthony Jordick
Members Absent:	Carl Runge
Staff Present:	Melinda Scott, Ken Belliveau (showed up briefly at 8:05 for Northridge discussion, left at 8:15)
Others Present:	Ben Avery (Blackrock Construction for Northridge)

1. **Call to Order:** Gary called the meeting to order at 7:07 AM.

2. **Public Comment:** None.

3. **Approval of Minutes from August 17, 2016:** Jean made a motion to approve the minutes of August 17 as written, Kim seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.

4. **Site Plan Review – DP 17-01 Northridge (Pre-application):** Ben Avery gave an overview of the project. He has been planning it for a while, he missed the deadline last year for Growth Management consideration. He is working with TJ Boyle to design and engineer the project. The property is 54 acres, and the proposed number of units are considerably under the maximum allowed. Has done a wetlands delineation and will make adjustments to the plan based on that delineation. The development is a natural extension of residential development in the Residential Zoning District, eventually connecting to Mt View Rd, based on the Town’s vision of growth. The proposed project is a departure from typical “cookie cutter” development, with a variety of housing types targeted towards multiple generations. At least 10% of the units will be perpetually affordable. When asked how that works, Ben stated through deed-restricted housing, tied to the median income in Williston. Thus, the allowable selling price of the perpetually affordable units will be adjusted over time based on the current median income. Entry level, smaller units are planned as well as single family homes on larger lots. The former will be HOA maintained, the latter probably maintained by owners. The former will be built first. Right now there is a surplus of affordable housing in allocation, so they may do a larger percentage of affordable housing. Ben has spent a lot of time doing public outreach, and he has made adjustments to the project plan based on feedback. When asked about landscaping, Ben stated that existing vegetation will provide some screening, and they also are planning additional landscaping. Ben mentioned the bike path – how the original alignment proposed by the Town has been adjusted based on neighborhood feedback. The bike path originally envisioned to the north side of the development, along the narrow strip of land in the Coyote Run open space, which was deeded to the Town as an easement for a

recreational path as a condition of approval for the Coyote Run development, is problematic because of the wetland. As an alternative to that alignment, Ben has agreed to build out the bike path going north to the overlook and dedicate the parcel as Martell Park. This path can connect to the north and west via an unimproved path (shown on plan), creating a loop. The developer would build out the trail and then it would become part of the Town's trail system. Jude asked about the access to the proposed development. Ben stated that the south entrance access from Metcalf Drive was deeded in the 1990's with the Southridge development, and the north entrance exits to Coyote Lane. There will be a traffic study done prior to submittal of Discretionary Permit Application and they will explore ways to mitigate traffic impacts, which are expected to be minimal. The south entrance encroaches on the stream buffer, and Ben is aware that they will need to get a conditional use from the state. Ben stated the proposed road is 30-40 feet away from the stream, and it is only the first 40 feet of road for which they will be seeking an exemption. There have been some concerns expressed by neighbors regarding traffic impacts, noise, and property values. Ben stated that the average property value of the proposed development will be comparable to property values in the Southridge development. Gary asked about energy efficiency standards, and Ben stated that the project will meet state-mandated standards, but they are not seeking to meet the gold-star energy standard. Gary asked Ben to state how he will address the Recommendations. New wetland delineation was done, and the design will be modified accordingly. They haven't decided how to deal with the open space, whether to deed it to the Town or keep it as common land. They will do a habitat assessment, and Gary mentioned siting the building envelopes to maximize the wildlife corridor along the stream. Viewshed impacts will be minimal on the southern side due to topography, but from other areas such as the golf course which is situated on a high point, some house will be visible. Clearing limits will be designed to minimize impacts to the viewshed on south and west side. Ken Belliveau stated that the landscape buffer should not be part of the individual lots but be part of the open space and managed by the association, so that in the future owners will not disturb it. Impacts to the stream off of Metcalf Drive will be minimized by reducing the size of road to the degree possible. Ben stated that they will provide staff with a wetlands delineation by next week, so that it can be reviewed and distributed with the materials for the DRB hearing on Sept 27. Jean mentioned the proposed alignment for a future path could be problematic due to the properties it passes through and landowner objections. WCC wants to make sure that a proposed future path is realistic. Their goal is to eventually connect a trail to Old Stage Estates. Ben stated he is willing to talk to neighboring landowners about a potential future path. Jean mentioned that sidewalks need to extend all the way up to the Coyote Lane entrance. Eric asked about the stormwater pond and whether it will be designed to handle all the runoff from the entire development. Ben stated yes, and that, as shown on the plans, it looks smaller than in actuality. Eric encouraged Ben to explore ways to maximize

onsite infiltration opportunities. Jude made a motion, which Jean seconded, to accept the Findings and Recommendations as amended.

5. Discussion of WCC Chair/Vice Chair positions: Eric made a motion to nominate Anthony for Chair and Kim for Vice Chair, Jean seconded the motion. The terms will start January 1, 2017 and will run until January 1, 2019. Motion was carried with 6-0 vote.

6. Cottonwood Crossing Findings and Recommendations – modification: Ken Belliveau had requested that the WCC make a recommendation addressing the potential impact of the project on the burr oak unique natural community, as this was something that was discussed at the Pre-application DRB hearing. Jean made a motion, and Jude seconded, to add a recommendation stating “The burr oak natural community identified in the Official Williston Unique Natural Communities map is outside of the project area. Based on this map, it appears that the proposed project will have an unsubstantial impact on the burr oak unique natural community.” Motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.

7. Mud Pond Country Park Ecological Assessment and next steps in management plan update: Deanne Wang contacted Melinda about having a UVM Field Naturalist Program student do a rapid ecological assessment of the Mud Pond Country Park to aid us in the update of the management plan. This was done last week as the field component of the student’s final exam. WCC members commented that the report was very well done. Gary stated that the Ecological Assessment be incorporated into the new management plan, asking the author’s permission and citing her. As for next steps, Melinda suggested having Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester, lead a public walk to get the public more involved with the update of the management plan. WCC supports this.

8. Staff Report/Other Business

- **Trails and Parks –**

- Melinda was contacted last week by VYCC, saying they had 1 week of crew time available for trail work next week. WCC members asked what the crew would do, and Melinda stated there are a number of “low-hanging fruit” projects she has in mind, mostly basic trail maintenance. Jean suggested de-rooting the Allen Brook extension trail to Michael Lane as one project they could do. Melinda asked whether and how much money the WCC wanted to allocate to this. There is money left over from the summer internship that potentially could be used. Jean moved that WCC hire VYCC for up to 3 days to work on trails, and spend up to \$1,000 from intern funds and \$2,000 from the trails budget. Jude seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 6-0 vote.

- Special WCC meeting is scheduled to discuss trails priorities and VYCC Community Crews – Sept 14. Melinda has invited John Woodard to speak about VYCC Community Crews.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 am.

Minutes Submitted by Melinda Scott: September 21.

Approved by WCC: September 21.