

TOWN OF WILLISTON

MEMORANDUM

November 8, 2018

TO: Rick McGuire
CC: Matt Boulanger; Nick Warner; Williston Conservation Commission
FROM: Melinda Scott
RE: Winooski Valley Park District annual allocation and acquisition of Jacob parcel

The Conservation Commission has recently met with Nick Warner, Executive Director of the Winooski Valley Park District, to discuss the proposed annual membership dues and the potential transfer of the Jacob parcel to the WVPD.

After consideration of the WVPD's budget, acquisition and park development activities over the past year, its numerous educational programs that benefit all member towns, and its efforts to serve broad regional conservation objectives, the Conservation Commission strongly supports the WVPD and recommends the town allocate funding for the WVPD at the requested amount of \$34,243 for fiscal year 2020.

One issue of concern over the years has been the lack of WVPD owned parks in Williston. Now, with the town's acquisition (by donation) of the former Jacob parcel, there is an opportunity to leverage WVPD's assistance in developing this parcel as a public park.

The WVPD has utilized its own staff resources to complete a natural resources inventory for the former Jacob parcel (attached), which is typically the first step in the development of a park. The WVPD Board has agreed that the acquisition and subsequent development of the parcel would benefit the Park District as a whole, and they are ready and willing to proceed pending the Town of Williston's approval.

The Conservation Commission feels there would be substantial benefits from and local support for WVPD acquiring, developing and managing the former Jacob parcel. One such benefit would be a park with direct access to the Winooski River, which the town is currently lacking. Having previously acquired and developed several riverfront open space parcels, WVPD has the experience and expertise to successfully and relatively quickly turn the former Jacob parcel into a valuable public open space asset.

For these reasons, the Conservation Commission recommends the Selectboard authorize the transfer of the Jacob parcel to the Winooski Valley Park District.