

**TOWN OF WATERVILLE VALLEY
CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES – FINAL
May 17, 2023
3PM TOWN OFFICES MEETING ROOM**

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:02pm
2. Attendees: Irit Levy, chair; Jennie Lucas, vice chair; Charles and Rebecca Hastings, members; John Recine, ex-officio, Cyndy Piekos, alternate; Paul Ricotta, alternate; Mark Decoteau, Town Manager; Steve Royer, Town Administrator; Rich Rita, Selectboard Chair; Kim Rawson, member of the public.
3. Irit read the Stewardship Statement and highlighted that it has been about 1 year since we adopted it.
4. The minutes from April 5 were approved unanimously (Cyndy P. motioned, Becca H. seconded).
5. Privilege of the floor
 - a. Kim Rawson spoke about forest fires, and what can be done to prevent them. Being inspired by Dr. Samuel Miller from PSU, whose presentation she attended many years ago, and who said it was predicted the WMNF would “burn down in the next 30-50 years”, she has started a project at WVES regarding proper stewardship of the forest to improve its health and prevent fires, including research on fire resistant plant and tree species and creating “citizen plans” – things the average person can do to help mitigate the risk of fires. She looks forward to collaborating with the ConComm and our fire safety personnel on this effort.
 - b. A conflict was brought to light regarding the same two people serving on both the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. John Recine decided to step down as a member of the ConComm, and Jennie Lucas will be the new Ex Officio member of the ConComm to the Planning Board.
 - c. Following John’s step-down, Cyndy Piekos was seated as a member for the remainder of the meeting.
6. Old Business
 - a. Rich Rita asked the ConComm if they would be willing to spearhead research into beaver activity mitigation in the vicinity of Town Wells #3 and #4. He asked for a report back with ranked options and their approximate costs by the Selectboard’s July 20th meeting. The ConComm was thankful that the Selectboard included them and agreed to help with this.
 - b. Update on Snow’s Brook project – the FS is awaiting further information from Rick VDP.

- c. Follow-up on construction site run-off – Director Noyes has spoken to the repeat offenders (Golden Heights, Brownstone Way), as well as other construction sites around the Valley. He has informed them that he will not perform any requested inspections until sediment control measures are taken care of.
 - d. Greenbelt parcel sign discussion – Surveying the Greenbelt parcel was tabled until the ConComm walks the site again. Rich R. reported finding two metal stakes along the boundary, which may be enough for our purposes of sign placement, and could save us the \$3,800 expense of a survey. The ConComm reviewed several mock-ups of signs – it was generally agreed that 3 small “badges” (~4in in diameter) would be placed along the edge of the parcel that runs beside the cross-country trail, and a larger, rectangular sign with the logo, explanation of the parcel (language being drafted by Charles H.), and the stewardship statement would be placed in a visible location near one end of the parcel/visible from the road. Steve R. will bring mock-ups of the larger sign to the June meeting.
 - e. WWTF – Mark reviewed this project – it is still at the 90% engineering phase. The Transfer Station project is still waiting on the environmental review from DES.
 - f. The 13.5 acre parcel – the Town asked Town Counsel whether or not this parcel could be accepted as a donation to the ConComm, or the Town, from a private party, and Mark reported back that this could be done.
 - g. Sierra Club’s “12 ways to halt climate change” – tabled until next meeting due to time constraints.
 - h. Testing for PFAs (forever chemicals) in our water – It is not yet a controlled chemical in the state of NH. Towns are waiting for DES to issue standards.
 - i. Replacing footbridge behind Snowy Owl – because this area is in a controlled flood zone due to the dam, we would have to go through DES, which is a whole different (expensive) playbook.
7. New Business
- a. Forest preservation v. forest management/proposed work to clear underbrush/connection w/ WMNF – Irit has reached out to the WMNF and they have forwarded lots of information regarding, including Community Wildfire Protection Plans. She will forward it to the rest of the Commission. Mark will forward the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan to Irit.

The date of the next regular meeting has been set for Wednesday, June 21 at 3pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 pm.

“We are located on N’dakinna, which is the traditional ancestral homeland of the Abenaki, Pennacook, and Wabanaki Peoples, past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land and waterways and the alnobak (people) who have stewarded N’dakinna throughout the generations.”