

**Waterbury Conservation Commission
Draft Meeting Minutes – 1/14/2020**

Present: Allan Thompson, Steve Hagenbuch, Mike Hedges , Krista Battles, Joan Beard, Erin Hurley, Tracy Sweeny

1. Assigned Secretary

- Krista Battles

2. Public

- Jeff Harvey- Moretown resident and advocate for wildlife, particularly as it relates to and interacts with recreation.
- Statements/Concerns
 - Presented a paper compiled by New Hampshire Fish and Game: Trails for People and Wildlife. Explains the potential negative effects of recreation trails on wildlife.
 - Concerned about the impacts that high density/high traffic trail systems on local wildlife.
 - NRCS soil layers in comparison with Waterbury recreational trails show that trails are often built on “limited” or “very limited” soils. These are less than ideal for building trails.
 - The impacts of backcountry skiers off of the Mountain Resorts are potentially impacting Bear wintering grounds.
 - We may want to look into saving rutting pit areas in the future.

3. Reflections on past, plans for future

- Allan Thompson is considering stepping down as Chair of the Waterbury Conservation Commission (WCC).

4. Review Progress of changes to the draft bylaws

- Limit the area in which increased regulation occurs.
- There are two possibilities for including the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor (SHWC). The area of interest, or the corridor priority connectivity area. There is more support for the latter.
 - This layer would not necessarily be an overlay but a rework of the Ridgeline Hillside Slope (RHS) District so that it includes these connectivity areas.
 - The proposed changes to the RHS District would allow properties to be defined by elevation.
 - WCC members should review and offer our feedback to Billy Vigdor in order to move forward with language building.
- Allan will continue to meet with Steve Lotspeich to communicate the changes suggested by the WCC to the Planning Board.
 - Allan will present the map at the next planning board meeting and will be getting feedback from the board members.
- Potential Questions:

- How do you know what you are protecting?
 - The shapefile will show the boundaries of both the SHWC and the SHWC Areas of Concern.
- How will you know if you're in or out?
 - You receive an opinion from the WCC. Addition or alternative could be to have an expert offer a professional opinion.

5. Potential Conservation Commission Member

- Linda Gilpin has shared that she is interested in joining the WCC. She is planning on beginning the select board appointing process by the next meeting.
- Linda has a background in development fundraising. Was the development director for Audubon.

6. Signage for the SHWC

- Mike Hedges spoke with AOT about signage for the SHWC that would indicate to drivers that there is wildlife movement through the area for the duration of the corridor.
- Will check back in when spring comes around.
- Maybe a bear crossing sign? Would be a memorable sign.

7. Budget reflection

- Erin Hurley will request time with Bill Shepeluk to get the budget.

8. Conservation Commission Training Follow-up

- Possible future training and/or project partnership with Kristen Balschunat of Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District
- Do we have funds that would support a water sampling effort to support research for tactic basin planning?
- What can we test for? What should we test for? What are the costs associated with the sampling?
- What are suggested waterbodies and locations that the conservation district would suggest sampling?

