



The Waterbury Conservation Commission held a warned meeting on **May 16, 2025 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.**

Members Present: Amy Marshall-Carney, Josh Lincoln, Annemarie Fortune, Marcy Blauvelt, Marty Johansen, Meg Baldor, Angela Hilsman Members of the Public: Mike Bard

A quorum was established. The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

#### **Agenda Review, Modifications, & Open Remarks**

- Agenda content as published remained the same. Order of agenda items was rearranged to accommodate member availability.

#### **Public Comments**

- None

#### **Hope Davey- Land Use and Class II Wetlands**

- Hope Davey is a town-owned property primarily used for recreation. The property includes a Class II wetland.
- Looking for recommendations to prevent the wetlands from being affected any further than how they are today.
- Meg's Video: Depicts a series of changes that have occurred in and around the wetlands since 2010. All the natural vegetation within the wetlands got completely removed. Trenching, expanded brush cutting, extensive mowing, stairs built in the woods; they brush cut for the expansion of Hole 2 and took out all the natural vegetation; all of this would've required state permitting. There are Facebook posts showing trenching that was done, and in places across the disc-golf park. Per the Waterbury Record's November 2019 article: "Volunteers bring disc golf course above par", volunteers were told to "mow where you throw". Pictures shared were taken 2019 - 2022.
- Hope Davey sits on Thatcher Brook, and with the flooding events, this wetland should be an opportunity to mitigate flooding.
- In 2021 the Recreation Committee got really involved, so public works folks backed off a bit.
- Additionally, J. Lincoln noted, with the pandemic, there was increased traffic in these spaces.
- M.Bard stated, with climate change, we want to build resilience for our future. It's something we have to be concerned with, especially with less prevention and recovery coming down from the federal level. We'd like our representatives to be looking at basin-wide planning, collaborating with other municipalities. It's critical to prevent flooding events.
- A. Marshall-Carney stated, we (the WCC) and the town can control what we own. We own this parcel - we need to understand what's going on up there, what should be going on up there, to include the regulations and rules; this group as a collective received a clear study on how to mitigate - the Waterbury Parks Master Plan - July 2023. The study was approved by the selectboard and an RFP was issued for approximately \$50K. Actions laid out in this plan did not happen in their entirety. In 2024, I spoke to Roger Clapp and Tom Lietz - there remains a lack of acknowledgement and understanding as to what is and has happened in and around the Class II wetlands.

- J.Lincoln asked M.Bard, a presiding select-board member, “Why did they (SB) not follow through on the study guidelines?”
- M.Bard did not know and advised us to ask N.Leitner, the newly appointed Planning Director. M.Bard felt this aligns with his responsibilities.
- M.Baldor noted, the park study, specific to the disc golf course, was managed, overseen, and otherwise rolled out by Steve Logspietch and David Frothingham who were members of the Park Study Steering Committee, responsible for understanding and addressing the study findings. As an adjoining landowner and town resident, M.Baldor participated in the Steering Committee meetings where she learned consultants were hired to analyze and provide recommended solutions. In her experience the Steering Committee never acknowledged these findings and were of the mind that they were never going to move holes impacting the wetlands.
- M.Bard clarified, the study was a plan for the overall park and ice rink recreation system. He recalled the ice rink plans materialized, and felt the Hope Davey trail system took a bit of a backseat. He was not aware of the Recreation Committee putting forward resolution plans.
- A.Marshall-Carney stated, it is best practice to have a land management plan for town-owned lands. We (the WCC) have oversight over natural resources. Class II Wetlands are natural resources. We know they’re not healthy, there’s erosion happening on the banks, they’re likely having an effect on flooding.
- A.Marshall-Carney raised, continuing the status quo is a complete liability for the town. Fulfilling our role as an advisory body to the Town I’d like to request that we send the presented draft email to T.Leitz (Town Manager), K. Lisaius (Recreation Director), B.Woodruff (Public Works Director), A.Johnson (Selectboard Chair) and N.Leitner (Planning Director) requesting a meeting to gain alignment and request two immediate actions: 1) Move basket #1, per the Waterbury Hope Davey and Ice Center Area ParksMaster Plan JULY 2023 pg. 34 and 2) Establish and adopt a land management plan for the Hope Davey parcel. These recommended actions support moving the people out of the wetlands and addressing existing roles and responsibility gaps. There’s a lot of stakeholders, but no clear land management roles have been defined. A land management plan would help record expectations and clarify roles and responsibilities.
- M.Baldor closed with, basket #1 was installed in ~2003. But, all the development on and around hole 1 since then would’ve needed a permit. They’re (Center Chains volunteers) talking with pride that they have ~300 people out there every day. Moving the basket is a first step, and then the town is going to have to figure out how to keep people out of the wetlands so they don’t get further trampled and destroyed.
- M.Blauvelt motioned to send email to stakeholders. M.Baldor seconded; A. Fortune abstained; A.Marshall-Carney, J.Lincoln, M.Johansen, A.Hilsman, M.Blauvelt, and M.Baldor approved.

#### **Meeting Minutes WCC 04.08.25 Review & Approval**

- M.Baldor motioned to approve as written. J.Lincoln seconded; A. Fortune abstained; A.Marshall-Carney, J.Lincoln, M.Johansen, A.Hilsman, M.Blauvelt, and M.Baldor approved.

#### **Town of Waterbury 2023 Water Quality Monitoring Data**

- M.Johansen was unable to meet with Billy Vidgor before this meeting. He will pursue it before next month's meeting.
- The water basin here is the Winooski Water Basin. We saw increases in phosphorus and chloride. M.Johansen is finding out what we do about this, when, and how.

### Chair Updates

- Natural Resources Inventory
  - The Town was not awarded the municipal planning grant. I was recently informed, the WCC budget approved at town meeting was contingent on the Town being awarded the municipal planning grant. T.Leitz email implies the WCC will have a \$0 budget for 2025. I have sent an email to T.Leitz and A.Johnson to clarify. In the email I reminded them, in our original budget request we had asked for money to support educational purposes, communications and outreach, etc. I've requested time at an upcoming selectboard meeting to re-request dollars be appropriated to us.
  - The objective of the natural resource inventory is to inform land use planning. A lot of towns have started to adopt this process. State based data has good indications, but it's not down to the parcel level. Having a detailed natural resources/communities inventory provides a more useful level of detail needed for land use -regulation decisions.
  - In talking with M.Stakus (Planning Commission Chair) we learned, there is an amendment process for the town plan and associated zoning bylaws. This learning presents the opportunity for us to revisit partnering with a consultant to perform a town wide NRI. Working with UVM's Naturalists students presents an opportunity to generate the needed inventory at a significantly reduced rate. (Approx. \$7K)
- UVM Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Problem Solving Graduate Program – Cost of Social Trails
  - On April 25th, UVM students delivered their final project to A.Marshall-Carney, S.Flanders, B.Woodruff and C.Parks. Their final work product was a story map which included all their research, it was a narrative of what they learned, and the associated implications. Unexpectedly, the Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD) demanded we turn the story map link off. A.Marshall-Carney to share the communications from EFUD and T.Leitz.
  - EFUD owns the ground-water source parcel that supplies water to over 6000 users within the town of Waterbury. This parcel spans across Waterbury and Stowe, abutting State of Vermont land. On April 17th, A.Marshall-Carney and C.Parks attended the quarterly Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership meeting to provide stakeholders with an update on the UVM team's progress and intended outcomes. Two representatives from the State of Vermont's Department of Forest Parks and Recreation attended and noted that unauthorized recreational activities are occurring on their property as well. In an effort to deter these actions, the State will be posting their property. Unpermitted/unauthorized uses include: mountain biking, backcountry skiing, and hiking. Preliminary findings suggest, at a minimum, these

activities are affecting erosion. It is unknown the specific effects on water quality. EFUD and T.Leitz confirmed, if the Town's existing groundwater source is shut down we would rely solely on wells, which cost approximately \$1,000/ day per well.

- General discussion:
  - How do we deter undesired unauthorized actions and create education around this? Per public feedback, these unauthorized recreation activities have been going on for 10+ years.
- 5/17 Community Volunteer Fair – 1-3pm Brookside Elementary
  - A.Marshall-Carney will design and staff the WCC table. M.Blauvelt will get Amy the educational materials used at last year's LEAP fair. There will be a fun and engaging activity for folks visiting the table. Who can guess the Native and Invasive species?
  - Types of Volunteers needed:
    - Habitat Restoration & Management: invasive plant control – remove or manage, riparian buffer establishment & maintenance – plant, brush planting, photo recording
    - Forestry and Natural Resources: tree planting, trail maintenance – debris removal
    - Public Outreach & Education: help organize events, create educational materials, draft media content, engage the public on conservation topics
    - Marketing & Graphic Design: Create appealing public facing branded marketing templates (power point/g-slides, letterhead etc.)
    - Wildlife & Plant Monitoring: Report wildlife, plant sightings using iNaturalist
    - Water Quality Monitoring: Annually collect water samples from winooski river tributaries

#### **2025 Strategic Plan Review & Update**

- For the June meeting, in support of our Community Outreach & Engagement goals, all WCC members will bring ideas for upcoming media pieces.
  - Invasives vs Native plants
  - Bear awareness
  - Pollinators
  - Hiking Trails

#### **Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm

**Next Meeting June 10, 2025**