

JOHNSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 2025

Present: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Noel Dodge, Peter Hammond, Adrian Schmidt, Deane Locke

Absent: Jared Jasinski, Johna Keefe, Jackie Stanton

Guest: Denise Ashman

Despite a large amount of razz about the misspelling of Lous' name, the April minutes were approved.

A question from Denise was added to the agenda.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The number was not available but there has been no expenditure in the past month.

VRC'S SIGN REQUEST

The Vermont River Conservancy hasn't responded to our requested changes to the signage draft for Journey's End and Beard's Recreation that they sent last month. Adrian communicated those to the VRC shortly after the last meeting.

As for the Juster property (house lot for sale abutting the JE trail), Lois asked VRC's Remy if they might be interested in buying it. He was to pass it on. There's no response so far.

POLLINATOR GARDENS

Life has gotten interesting for our gardens. Lois has a recent map that illustrates a plan to bench and flood a dual area on Wescom Rd. for flood resiliency. It shows what would be the end of the pollinator gardens where they exist, as well as part of the skatepark. This plan, the Wescom Resiliency Initiative, is believed to have been produced through LCPC and we have not been made aware of it until now. We identified a few sticking points, such as an inefficient culvert, probability of the river breaking through exposed land, and a potentially under-functioning waterway from the river to the lagoon.

One questions the return on the amount of money and time invested to make this happen.

Who makes the determination to do this excavating? We don't know.

Noel made the more practical alternative suggestion of digging out around the salt pile area at the town garage.

Meanwhile, Lois had a \$500 tiny grant awarded by AVCC for paying our share of the new signage to the pollinator gardens and for planting. Before we can accept it, we need to learn more about this plan, including how likely it is to happen.

Our resident selectboard man will ask questions about this issue on our behalf.

GOMO

Noel spoke with Mike Green about his proposal for the management plan but he was vague as to the details Noel was asking for. It was decided to go ahead with the work and to ask for more information if we feel that the plan is lacking anything we need. It will be included in the contract that if giving more information is necessary, there will be no extra charge for it.

Mike was agreeable to Adrian's going with him when he walks the property.

The Gomo survey request is still in front of the selectboard. Tom Galinat plans to talk to one of the people who gave an estimate about lowering the price. Peter will check with Tom about it.

JCC AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

We agree that posting on FPF and social media is a good idea and we should stay with it, doing it twice per month. Sue will have a say about the land management form in the next week.

Jackie indicated that she was confused about the timing of these posts, and other folks may be as well, so to be clear- One person will do one every two weeks (two per month), more or less. BUT: if something comes into your mind that you think would be a good piece of conservationish info to share with the public, put it out there any time. We can be spontaneous! You can't talk too much CC.

BROCHURE

Dean presented a mockup of the front of a brochure and is still working on the back. That will have a list of the places we steward with short descriptions, along with information on the land management form. He needs pictures of the CC in action, which we'll send.

BIRD TALK

Noel gave a swell presentation about migrating birds to a group of 25 people in the last of the '24/'25 educational series. Part of the Morrisville CC attended and seemed to be impressed. Thank you, Noel!

AUDUBON COLLECTION

The last of the prints are living in Sue's guest room while we look for another opportunity to sell them. Thanks to the sale, the reserve fund has \$492 more dollars.

Noel brought up investing the reserve fund so that it might grow on its own. We need a discussion with Rosemary to see if that's possible.

JOURNEY'S END

Adrian notified VRC about the trees down at JE but they just offered to buy him a hand saw, which wasn't quite the hefty pole pruner he had in mind. They don't generally do that work; we do. Noel and Dean have taken care of most of it and they'll follow up with the rest of it.

The two benches still need to be anchored.

There was very little trash when Lois visited recently.

BEARD'S

The picnic table still needs to be locked to the installed chain.

Noel and Eben cleaned up the park and that stretch of the river on Green Up Day.

COMMUNITY VALUES MEETS THE TALC MILL PROPERTY

This is a longer conversation than we have time for tonight and it may be an appropriate discussion for the community group leaders' meeting on May 26.

DENISE HAS A REQUEST

Denise relayed a request from the Hardwick Conservation Commission that we share how we got the information from our natural resource inventory to the public. Sadly, we didn't do too much beyond talk about it at a March Gladness Sunday and post it on the town website. We suggested that they come to our meeting and that they might talk to Jens Hilke about doing a community values survey. They've already spoken with him.

MISC

- Is the land management form available on the town's website? We can't find it. Lois will address that and the Gomo surveying when she appears before the selectboard on May 18 as the CC chair.
- Welcome back, Denise! She'll be attending meetings when possible as a volunteer.
- Hardwick CC starts their meetings with folks sharing what they've observed outside lately. Funny, we end them that way. Lately the bears are active, the peepers are back and that weird-sounding Wilson's snipe is singing. Or whatever they call it.
- May 10 is the EBird Global Count. Noel will put up an FPF post about it.
- Our email address is messed up. Again.

Adjourned at 8:40.

Next meeting is on Thursday, June 10, 2025 at 6:30 at the library.

Submitted by Sue Lovering, Secretary.