

DRAFT Warren Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes 10/24/2023

Participants Jito Coleman, Amy Polaczyk, Kate Wanner, Carolyn Schipa, Jim Edgecomb, Jonathan Clough, Rocky Bleier

Public Present Stan Walker (via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 6:41 pm

1. MRPD Annual Data Report Presentation

Sam Robinson from MRPD came to give a presentation on the 2023 Annual Data Report. MRPD goals include a healthy & sustainable environment. Several aspects of his data report painted a picture of Warren wildlife habitats under additional stress. For example,

- MRV town population (full-time residents) up by ~50% since 1990; increasing faster than Washington County levels
- Warren averages 75% of all MRV Vacation Home sales annually
- While 27% of MRV is currently conserved. (2-3% increase since 2019)– trail counts and recreation use are also up

When Sam asked for feedback, WCC noted that an additional challenge to the valley is the population/development/recreation pressure on wildlife and ecological health. Sam stated that future reports will incorporate a forest parcelization database that will help understand this dynamic. WCC also noted the lack of data about agriculture and the farm economy is a data gap in the report.

WCC expressed thanks to Sam for his time and his useful and informative report.

2. Recap of Biodiversity Series Event: Oct. 19th Big Pic – Ethan Tapper

Jito and WCC gave a big shout out to Stan for organizing the presentation on Thursday Oct 19. The presentation was very thoughtful and there was a good turnout. The presentation is/will be available on MRVTV and Ethan Tapper's Youtube page

Jito asked, should we keep the series going? About 50 people present each meeting, there is a \$150 per meeting fee for the venue.

Stan suggested that while the series went well, it could potentially have a stronger impact if kept to two presentations per year– one in spring, one in fall.

Jito will discuss with Curt Lindberg (Waitsfield WCC) and Amy, Fayston Conservation Commission regarding future topics and financial/organizational responsibility for the meetings

3. Conservation and Recreation Visioning (CRV) Update

George and Jim drafted a position paper regarding WCC opinion regarding trails in the valley to report back to the CRV group. The paper received positive feedback from WCC with a suggestion to keep things broad at this point and not get too “in the weeds” with respect to specific policies.

Regarding the consultant scope of work. Jito suggested that Arrowwood should identify sensitive areas without regard to trails and then overlay trails afterwards..

Stan noted that nobody is discussing trail maintenance, and emphasized the importance of improving and existing trails; an emphasis on quality vs. quantity.

4. Update on Bear Awareness:

Bear awareness– fall fairs were successful, Chris Stevenson, videos of bear sightings and issues with trash cans. Luke Foley has joined bear initiative. Suggests supplemental signage at trailheads for bears? Stickers/magnets for dumpsters? Margo is requesting money for the budget.

5. Knotweed Project Update

Knotweed: there is a multi-town collective agreement to try to duplicate town budgets in the same way it was managed last year.

There is a tri-town \$130k proposal to Lake Champlain Basin Program, will hear in December. Katie Kane of USFWS from Bolton met with Jito and Curt this week to discuss knotweed control and streambank restoration efforts. She is a big supporter of our work eradicating Knotweed.

Jito is continuing to research the possibility of funding goat control which will be required in higher-density areas down stream..

Every tributary above Warren is either clean or being managed,

6. Cathleen Miller Land Parcel

A vote was taken and the WCC is unanimously in approval of the town taking possession of the land from Cathy Miller.

Next meeting scheduled for November 14th, 5:30-7pm. Warren Library.

Adjourned 8:27 pm