

Draft 11/11/25 Meeting Minutes - Richmond Conservation Commission

Meeting Date: 11/11/25

Meeting Time: 7:30 PM (motion passed to change to 7:00 PM pending confirmation)

Attendance: RCC Members -Kit Emery, Bob Low, Sam Pratt, Susannah Zeveloff, Judy Rosovsky, Jeanette Malone (Public: Melissa Wolaver)

Minutes Prepared by: Jeanette Malone

7:30 Call to Order & Introductions

Appointment of Minutes Taker & Approval of Previous Minutes

- Discussion on the need for a designated minutes taker.
- **Motion:** Approve October minutes and appoint Jeanette as minutes taker.
- **Motion passed to approve minutes from the Special October Meeting**

Meeting Protocols & Agenda Procedures

- Discussion of improving meeting protocols and ensuring adherence to the Open Meeting Law.
- Judy reviewed the revised agenda protocol outlining timelines and responsibilities.
- Discussed pros and cons of human-taken minutes over Otter transcription due to accuracy and attribution concerns, and the merits of incorporating both. Otter helps in the interest of saving time for the note taker who may need more time for RCC-related actions between meetings.
- Consideration of recorded meetings for improved public access.

7:45 Election of Conservation Commission Chair

- Sam was nominated by Kit and seconded by Jeanette.
- Sam shared his willingness to serve, acknowledging that if there were a potential conflict of interest due to his role at ACFC, he would recuse himself.
- Members highlighted the need for Sam's experience, and Melissa Wolaver, a member of the public, cited her positive experience working with Sam as the co-chair of the ACFC. Sam noted he has a good grasp of the actual business, rules, and ethics of running the meetings. He wants help keeping up with the larger CC community in Vermont. He's good at meeting his deadlines for the ACFC. He's comfortable with it at this point - sees it as a trial period until the end of May.

Motion: To elect Sam as the new RCC Chair.

Motion passed to approve Sam as the new Chair of the RCC.

8:05 Meeting Timing & Logistics

- Discussion on optimizing meeting timing while accommodating member schedules.
- **Motion:** Change meeting start time from **7:30 PM to 7:00 PM**, pending logistical confirmation with Josh.
- Members noted the importance of maintaining a quorum.

8:15 Update on Richmond Mountain Trails (RMT) Proposal

- Summary provided regarding Selectboard's decision to **deny the RMT proposal**, citing concerns over:
 - There is a need for assurance that the equipment will be used in Richmond if paid for by Richmond residents.
 - Equipment ownership and responsibility
- Emphasis was placed on improved communication between RMT and town committees. Discussion of strategies for strengthening future proposals and addressing Selectboard concerns - In the interest of enhancing applications and building bridges between the RCC and applicants, the RCC will invite, but not require, applicants to share drafts of their proposals before motions are made, providing sufficient time to discuss the applications.

8:25 Recruitment & Community Engagement

- RCC has an ongoing need for new members of the Conservation Commission.
- Discussed outreach strategies, including:
 - Collaboration with Vermont Master Naturalist (VMN)
 - Connect with potential members through invasive species mapping, pulling, and native planting.
 - "Richmond Walks & Talks" events
- VMN update: A group has been assigned to **ReWild Richmond** and is ready for small-scale, high-value projects. Susannah is part of the VMN program and one of five members in her group. The program requires doing a community project by May. People in her group may want to carry the project on past May. They would like

direction from the RCC, and some may join the RCC. Alicia Daniel, the head of VMN, encouraged them to be open to assigned tasks. The spirit of the group is to get direction.

- The urgency of addressing bindweed and other large-scale, complex introduced species projects on town property necessitates hiring professionals to manage them effectively. Not within the scope of what VMN is tasked to do.

Jeanette and Susannah will coordinate, and Jeanette will provide updates. Jeanette has also asked RCC members to share their thoughts.

9 pm Mapping and Hiring Help to control Introduced Species

- Richmond Pulls Together is an example of an RCC ReWilding project with an emphasis on community engagement, education, and long-term, neighborhood-based stewardship.
- Identified the need for a user-friendly mapping system to track invasive infestations and management actions.

Tools discussed included:

- - Pre-made base maps, Survey123, Ash-mapping app used by Caitlin Littlefield, Integration with Trail Forks, where appropriate

Bob Low proposed hosting a panel discussion featuring experts in introduced species control.

- Proposal to begin mapping on public lands and at the neighborhood level.
- Discussion on supporting mapping and hiring professionals for big-scale projects through potential CRF funding.
- The group emphasized the importance of identifying town-owned parcels for targeted investment and eligibility for CRF funding.

9:25 Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) Improvements

- Proposed a two-step application process to improve proposal quality and completeness.
- Encouragement for applicants to bring draft proposals to the Commission for early feedback.

- Plan to update the RCC website with clear CRF guidance and encourage early communication.
- Discussed allocating more meeting time for CRF review during critical cycles.

12. ACFC Updates & Trail Management

- Discussion of rest policy for new trails, responsible trail maintenance, and closure communication.
- Consideration of using Trail Forks for coordinated updates across RMT and RTC networks.

9:30 Climate Study Class Update

- Sam's report about the ongoing climate study class project.
- Concerns have been noted regarding limited communication with collaborators.

Action Items

- Confirm the feasibility of moving the meeting start time to 7:00 PM with Josh.
- Coordinate a meeting between Jeanette and the Vermont Master Naturalist group.
- Check with the town on the process for hiring professionals for invasive species work (e.g., bindweed).
- Explore user-friendly mapping software options.
- Draft new website language encouraging early CRF proposal submission.

9:40 Meeting adjourned