

Richmond Conservation Commission

September 2026 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Trevien Stanger, Kit Emery, Trevor Brooks, Melissa Wolaver, Sam Prat, Susannah Zeveloff, Jeanette Malone

1. Opening Business

- Roll call and quorum confirmed.
- Timekeeper: Susannah; Minutes taker: Jeanette.
- August 11 minutes: Kit moved to approve; Trevien seconded.
- No changes to the agenda or public comments, except a name correction.

2. Updates

Introduced Species Management RFP

- Trevor revised the RFP to clarify RCC's preference for mechanical removal before considering herbicides.
- Additional revisions include restoration goals, scope of work, and a proposed management plan.
- Josh recommended presenting the RFP to the Selectboard before putting it out to bid.

Action Item: Sam will present the revised RFP to the Selectboard.

Andrews Community Forest

- Public feedback on Management Plan 2 (MP2) continues.
- Merrick indicated that Richmond Mountain Trails (RMT) will not support MP2 unless the Sip of Sunshine (SOS) trail is enshrined in the MP2.
- Sam is seeking additional feedback from RMT.
- Options for rerouting the former VAST trail through the wetland include a boardwalk or an uphill route with several bridges.
- Commissioners discussed the respective roles of RMT and the Richmond Trails Committee (RTC). Melissa questioned whether the Selectboard or Josh supported seeking feedback directly from RMT.

- Sam expressed a preference for RTC, as an official town committee, to represent trail interests while acknowledging RMT's funding and organizational capacity.
- Trevor noted that RTC has limited minutes and recordings, making its positions difficult to follow. RTC has one recommended member involved but no regular representative providing updates.

Action Item: Sam will continue seeking feedback from RMT.

Richmond Pulls Together

- Two early-detection Asiatic Bittersweet removal sites were organized in September, before berries were ready to fall.
- Focusing on a monthly target species allows volunteers to work at multiple neighborhood locations.
- Buckthorn is a potential next project, building on last year's neighborhood removal efforts.
- Duncan from the Intervale reported success controlling buckthorn through three seasons of pulling.
- Trevien suggested a system to track RCC projects and accomplishments, potentially including annual town reports and a map documenting successive years of work.

Action Item: Explore a project-tracking system, such as Survey 1,2,3 that the Intervales uses to map and document RCC activities and progress.

3. Richmond Stormwater and Wetlands Rules

Stormwater Management

- Trevor discussed developing a simple, accessible process to help landowners address stormwater runoff.
- Friends of the Winooski can assess properties, recommend improvements, and help landowners obtain grants.

Vernal Pools and Wetlands

- Many vernal pools remain unmapped. Commissioners discussed identifying and mapping them to support their recognition and protection.
- The town could consider additional protections for Class III wetlands.

- Sam raised questions about RCC's capacity to review wetlands and development proposals.
- Commissioners discussed appointing an RCC representative to attend Development Review Board (DRB) meetings.
- Commissioners supported receiving updates from Trevor about relevant development proposals and opportunities for RCC input.

Action Items:

- Trevor will provide updates on relevant stormwater, wetland, and development issues.
- Explore opportunities to map vernal pools and establish RCC involvement in the development review process.

4. Tree Planting Workshop

- Trevien expressed interest in leading tree planting workshops a couple of times per year.
- Commissioners discussed using an October Farmers' Market event to promote the Intervale Conservation Nursery (ICN) and share information.
- A spring workshop would allow more time to prepare and potentially provide plants for participants.
- The October event could proceed even if ICN cannot attend.

Action Item: Trevien will coordinate with the Farmers' Market and explore participation by the Intervale Conservation Nursery.

5. Shared Tools and Uses

- Commissioners reviewed the proposed tool list, prioritizing multipurpose tools for gardening and invasive plant removal.
- Kit plans to meet with the Richmond Free Library to clarify its readiness, timeline, and arrangements for a shared tool program.

Action Item: Kit will meet with library representatives and report back to RCC.

6. RCC Meeting Process Improvements

- Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.
- Commissioners were encouraged to notify Sam in advance when an agenda item requires more than a brief update.

- Topics proposed for future discussion include agenda efficiency and distribution of responsibilities

Action Item: Commissioners should send Sam topics requiring additional discussion time before the next meeting.

7. Town Port-A-Potty Alternatives

- Susannah proposed exploring a partnership with Wasted.earth, a local business that processes human waste into fertilizer for agricultural use.

Action Item: Susannah will share information about Wasted.earth for commissioners to review.

8. Exploring Alternatives to Fireworks

- Discussion deferred to the next meeting.

Action Item: Add fireworks alternatives as the third agenda item at the next meeting.

9. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.