



Waitsfield Conservation Commission Meeting

Minutes

March 18, 2026

Members Present: James Donaldson, Bruno Grimaldi, Ted Joslin, Leo Laferriere, Curt Lindberg, Chris Loomis, Gail O'Keefe

Members Absent: Phil Huffman

Others Present:

The meeting was called to order by Curt at 6:34 pm. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

1. Welcome, Agenda Review

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Public Input

No members of the public were present.

3. Review/Approve January minutes

The minutes of February 18, 2026 were amended and approved.

4. Wu/Fairgrounds Consultant RFP

Chris reported that only one proposal had been received, from CRO, and that the proposed work was beyond the scope of the RFP, and the quote provided of \$25K was higher than the CC anticipates spending on the project.

Discussion ensued regarding how to proceed, with Chris noting that he had reached out to Kristen Sharpless for documentation related to the existing Plan, and that Kristen may indirectly provide a reference of this project to a consultant. Gail noted that she had contacted Amy Sheldon, who consulted for Fayston's Boyce Forest Plan, and Curt suggested reaching out to AVCC for consultant suggestions. It was agreed to follow up on this information.

Potential reasons for the small number of responses were brought forward, with it being indicated that one reason might be the public input aspect of the RFP requirements; there was some discussion as to whether this is an aspect of the Plan development that might be handled by the CC rather than the consultant. It was suggested that a survey could be used and publicized; and agreed that at least one public meeting is imperative.

5. Commission Member Reappointments

Bruno, Ted, Leo, and James confirmed their interest in being reappointed.

6. Officer Elections

MOTION: *A motion to reelect the current slate of officers – Curt as Chair, Leo as Vice-Chair, Bruno as Treasurer, and Gail as Secretary – passed unanimously.*

7. Invasives/Restoration Field Season Plans

Curt outlined that seven interns from UVM have accepted summer positions; one is a returning intern from last year who will be filling the role of Intern Project Coordinator. There will also be a Field Naturalist student involved this year, working on a Master's Project assessment of invasive species removal and restoration work; she has assembled a team of academic advisory to assist. Their work will begin at the end of May or beginning of June.

8. Wildlife Corridor Mapping

Curt noted that the topic of corridor mapping had been discussed at the tri-town meeting, and outlined the efforts of the Warren and Fayston Commissions. He explained that Phil is looking into possible funding through the CRV project to assist with Waitsfield's potentially undertaking some additional mapping efforts. Curt has also asked Phil to contact Jito Coleman of Warren to for his advice.

9. Emerald Ash Borer Plan Update

Leo indicated that the committee is working on a response plan, and that a draft exists which needs some additional information. He explained that it will be difficult to proceed with any plans along Town roadways without a Tree Warden in place, noting that the Tree Board has two of three positions filled, but that no Tree Warden has been appointed. He noted that the plan will include a focus on Main Street trees at the onset, likely with both treatment and removal; he also explained that the Town's role regarding private land will be educational, and the CC will likely develop the education plan, as well as propose a plan for addressing the ash borer in Town forests. The initial plan will cover a year's time, after which subsequent years will be planned for; there is some money in reserve funds to begin taking action. Curt noted that the creation of Town capability for insecticide injection is being explored.

Members indicated they would like more information about the roles of Tree Board members and the Tree Warden, and there was a suggestion that the position might be easier to fill if a stipend were offered.

Leo explained the difficulty in identifying female ash trees, which makes treating for the longevity of the species complicated.

10. Financial Matters

Bruno reminded the group that there is \$4600 remaining to be spent by the end of June. James offered to plan for ordering trail signs in different colors, and possibly using the funds to provide a down payment for Scrag trail work was discussed.

Bruno noted that the sugarbush income received was \$7637; this had been posted to the wrong account number, and will be corrected.

11. Roundtable

There was some discussion of the recent water system leak, and some speculation as to what the underground impacts would be.

Chris pointed out that the floodplain restoration scoping project will in some ways be similar to that which is taking place at the Randall Street field in Waterbury.

Gail and Curt will be attending a meeting with the Board of Friends of the Mad River, where the agenda will include discussion of the need for a vehicle for tri-town conversation projects such as invasive species management and habitat restoration.

It was noted that no sightings of emerald ash borer have been confirmed in Waitsfield, although James spoke of his being sure of an infested tree in Warren.

12. Other business:

- Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on April 15, 2026.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary