Waitsfield Conservation Commission Meeting

Minutes
June 17, 2026

Members Present: James Donaldson, Phil Huffman, Ted Joslin, Leo Laferriere, Chris Loomis, Gail O'Keefe
Members Absent: Bruno Grimaldi, Curt Lindberg
Others Present: Kari Dolan

The meeting was called to order by Leo at 6:32 pm. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

1. Welcome, Agenda Review
Some items were noted to be included in the Other Business portion of the meeting.

2. Public Input
No members of the public asked for time to speak.

3. Review/Approve minutes
The minutes of May 20, 2026 were approved.

4. Kari Dolan – Membership Interest
Kari spoke of her background and her interest in serving on the Conservation Commission, noting that she would not have the capacity to participate until the middle of August. Commission members spoke of the time commitment and types of work involved in being on the Commission. Phil outlined that candidates are asked to submit a letter of interest for consideration, which Kari indicated she would provide, and everybody thanked Kari for her time and interest.

5. Spring Trail Work and Phase 2 Trail Build
James outlined that the two-person crew began work in late May, and that work is progressing well. One field judgement change was made to the trail layout, which James approved, with parameters put in place for the steeper area being disturbed. He explained that the crew will be doing some water bar and other maintenance to the current trail as they near completion of the project, and suggested that the current lower portion of the logging road/trail be decommissioned as it is not holding up well to being used as a hiking trail. It was agreed that the yellow tags on the skid road would be removed as a first step in this effort, with further

discussion of the potential for closing out the road and revegetating. Creation of a new informational panel or other strategies for updating the kiosk information were considered, and James noted that he would be working on trail marking once the trail work is complete.

6. Results of Land Trust Planning Meeting

Leo noted this was a well-attended meeting, with representatives from various groups. Ted and Kari outlined that the main purpose was to discuss whether a local land trust would be beneficial, particularly in order to have the ability to react quickly when opportunities arise, as well as to pursue opportunities that fall below the threshold of existing state or national land conservation organizations. Stewardship, continued public access, and coordination with local housing needs were also discussed at the meeting.

7. EAB Plan Review and Approval

Leo noted that the most recent draft (7) has the same language as what was sent for review, but includes pictures. It was confirmed that this is intended to be a living document.

MOTION: *Chris moved to accept Draft 7 of the EAB Response Plan and to recommend to the Selectboard that it be considered for adoption. The motion was seconded by Ted, and passed unanimously.*

8. Management Plan Consultant

Gail reported on a proposal received from Michael Brown of Birdseye Consulting, which had been circulated to CC members.

MOTION: *Gail moved to accept Michael Brown's proposal to prepare a Management Plan, updating the Wu Ledges Plan to include the recently acquired Fairgrounds parcel. The motion was seconded by Chris, and after some discussion passed unanimously.*

During the discussion, Chris and Gail confirmed that they had spoken with Michael of the need to integrate with the existing Plan, and provided information on the CC's vision and goals for the parcels. It was noted that the intent is to have Micheal attend an upcoming meeting for an initial discussion of the Plan. It was agreed that the CC should include a conversation regarding objectives for the Fairgrounds parcel at their next meeting, and subsequently invite Michael to the following meeting, with the understanding that pubic input is also necessary. CC members will review the goals and objectives in the Wu Ledges Plan and the donor intent letter and other documents pertinent to the Fairgrounds parcel in preparation for this discussion; Gail will circulate related materials.

9. Financial Matters

Bruno had provided a report. No questions raised or action taken.

10. Other Business

- Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2026.
- Other – Nothing.

11. Executive Session

MOTION: *A motion to enter Executive Session passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:10 pm and returned to open session at 8:25 pm.

MOTION: *Phil moved to authorize Chris Loomis to communicate with the Town Administrator regarding ongoing confidential real estate matter and to report back to the Commission in Executive Session at their July meeting. The motion was seconded by James, and passed unanimously.*

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary