

The Greensboro Conservation Commission

Minutes

General Commission Meeting
10:00 a.m. Saturday, September 21st, 2024

Present

Emily Cayer, *Advisor*
Jane Hoffman, *Treasurer*
Erika Karp, *Member*
Will Marlier, *Clerk*
Linda Shatney, *Member*
Chris Steel, *Chair*
Peter Watkinson, *Member*

Absent

Clive Gray, *Member*
David Kelley, *Member*

Members of the Public

Liza Keisler
JoAnn Hanowski

1.) 10:00 - **Meeting Commences**

2.) Will Marlier: **Review & Approve Minutes** of the Meeting on July 13th, 2024

a.) Progress on Actions

Will Marlier started the meeting by running through the action items from the prior meeting. He shared that he had not heard back from Mr. James LaRock regarding the Lake Eligo stormwater pollution prevention plan, and that he would welcome written testimony on the issue should Mr. LaRock choose to submit it. Will Marlier reached out to attendees of the Greensboro Environmental Summit the day before, and had begun to receive responses on scheduling.

All action items relating to the monitoring of wildlife crossings had moved forward, except Erika Karp had not been successful in contacting the McGraths and neither Chris Steel nor Peter Watkinson had had an opportunity to broach the subject at a recent Greensboro Land Trust meeting.

All action items regarding the invasives program were moved forward, and will be referenced under that section in the minutes.

Peter Watkinson did not recall volunteering to contact the HCA regarding the film *Beaver Believers* for a 2025 summer showing.

3.) Jane Hoffman: **Treasurer's Report & Future Expenses**

Jane Hoffman distributed an updated financial report to attendees and stated that the commission's finances were "straight forward" and that "we're in good shape". Peter Watkinson and Jane Hoffman shared that the "missing" Tiny Grant check had been located and cashed.

Net assets currently stand at **\$2,675.54**.

4.) **Election of Officers & New Members**

Chris Steel nominated Jane Hoffman and Will Marlier to continue in their current roles for an additional year. Will Marlier nominated Chris Steel to serve as Chair for an additional year and recommended that the three members be voted on as a single slate. There being no other nominations, voting occurred and the slate was unanimously elected.

Chris Steel asked members to consider Liza Keisler as a candidate to fill the last vacancy. She then addressed the commission and shared her interest in its work, as well as some of her personal and professional background. She was elected by the body unanimously. **Chris Steel will follow up with the Select Board for their confirmation. Jane Hoffman will make sure the town website is properly updated.**

There was some debate about Conservation Commission members' term length and limit. It was reiterated that members serve 4-year terms, with no term limit. Erika Karp reminded the commission that the town report listed the re-election year for a number of members incorrectly. **Chris Steel volunteered to sort out members' re-election years.**

5.) Will Marlier: **Invasives Program Report**

Will Marlier reported back on his visit to Hyde Park and the Knot in Hyde Park project. He shared that they had successfully mapped over 80 distinct knotweed locations in the town, and that most of them were under active management. He reported on varying methods of management ranging from pulling, to cutting, to covering, to goat pasture, to herbicide. He shared that they used tidy drying

stations, propped up with posts around the boundary. He also reported on the type of materials and signage they utilized at different sites.

Will Marlier stated that they benefited from ~3 very active members who did the majority of the volunteer work, and several landowners who were willing to manage the outbreaks on their own property. Their positive relationship with their local road crew also seemed to benefit their work.

Chris Steel inquired into how they ultimately remove dried material from the site, and **Will Marlier shared that he thought they simply composted in place, but offered to follow up to get a definite answer.**

Peter Watkinson asked how much time Will Marlier and Chris Steel had put into managing invasives this season. Will shared that he worked just under 8 hours, and Chris Steel suggested he worked over 40 hours. Will Marlier reported that the Highland Lodge had been receptive to the idea of providing some of the labor, and that he worked alongside their employee, Kerry, the last time he cut there.

At Chris Steel's suggestion, **Will Marlier agreed to look into finding alternative stakeholders** in this project in hopes of spreading the growing workload between more people. Peter Watkinson suggested hiring a part-time town employee to manage invasive sites.

Will Marlier also volunteered to look into...

- 1. Additional funding sources.**
- 2. Pricing for new signage and stakes.**
- 3. Contacting the Greensboro road crew.**

Chris Steel relayed that he had spent a full day with volunteers at the Mountain View Country Club managing invasive species on site there (such as bittersweet).

Chris Steel and Will Marlier outlined the events of Mike Bald's visit. It was not particularly well attended, although they received a lot of good feedback from Mike Bald on different approaches they might want to take on site management. They agreed that they would publicize the event differently next time.

6.) Chris Steel: **Pollinator Pathway**

Chris Steel announced that he had continued working with Dan Predpal and Liza Keisler on the rail trail pollinator flower bed, and that they were now planning to

lay the seeds in the spring. Liza Keisler reported that she had picked out a variety of plants that will have no dormancy, grow from seed, and offer reliable seasonal progression throughout the growing season. **Liza Keisler plans to purchase those seeds over the winter, and may make some small changes as she continues to think about it.** The Commission voted unanimously to designate up to \$200.00 for the purchase of said seeds.

Chris Steel shared that they had decided to delay the planting of a pollinator garden at the Arnolds' property until next year.

7.) JoAnn Hanowski: **Roads & Stormwater Runoff**

JoAnn Hanowski presented on the Watershed Stewards' new "Adopt a Culvert" program. She informed the commission on roadways' outsized impact of adding phosphorus into the waterways. The program would encourage landowners to perform basic maintenance on nearby culverts to prevent them from becoming clogged and causing undo erosion.

Liza Keisler expressed concern with town practices of channeling water and increasing velocity, which ultimately contributes to more fluvial erosion during high-volume rain events.

Erika Karp mentioned that she was concerned that watersheds are not limited to single municipalities, and naturally transcend town boundaries. She would like to see inter-town efforts to address water quality.

Ultimately the entire Commission voted in favor of co-sponsoring the program.

8.) Emily Cayer: **Wildlife Crossings**

Emily Cayer provided updates on the wildlife crossing program. She and Chris Steel installed two wildlife cameras on John Stone's property, which he retrieves footage from on a weekly basis. One located in a mature forest, the other in a marshy meadow. They successfully captured footage of wildlife, although one may need to be moved due to hiking activity.

Members of the commission generally agreed that the cameras should be referred to as "wildlife cameras" and not "game cameras" as hunting was not the intended use. Additionally, there was discussion of how the data collected should be used

and it was generally agreed that species and their locations should not be released publicly in case hunters or poachers were to act on that information.

Emily Cayer volunteered to distribute the footage amongst the members of the Commission, and will work on piecing together a short video to show at the next meeting.

Will Marlier volunteered to add his personal wildlife camera's footage to the Google Drive, which Emily Cayer will share with him.

All members discussed a variety of possible locations for the other two wildlife cameras. Chris Steel recommended that the entire Commission continue brainstorming locations.

GCC members that also belong to the GLT should report to the GLT the work being done on wildlife crossings, and see if there is room for collaboration.

9.) Jane Hoffman & Chris Steel: **HCA Bird Event / Bird Diva Walk**

Jane Hoffman and Chris Steel informed the Commission that the HCA bird event was well attended and generally successful. Jane noted that VINS was a particularly big hit amongst children, who crowded around the table to see talons, wings, and skulls.

This event had lower attendance than past years, likely because it was held on a Saturday as opposed to the typical Sunday afternoon and was competing with Circus Smirkus.

Bridget Butler, the Bird Diva, showed interest in coming back to Greensboro next summer to lead a slow birding walk. **Chris Steel volunteered to coordinate this.**

10.) Jane Hoffman: **Ethan Tapper @ The HCA**

Jane Hoffman reported that this program is pretty much ready to go. Chris Steel designed and provided the flyers for it. **Jane Hoffman will continue to promote it through Front Porch Forum, and other community forums.**

11.) Peter Watkinson: *Beaver Believers 2025 Program*

Peter Watkinson expressed that he had no particular attachment to the *Beaver Believers* film or program, and wondered if it was even necessary for the Commission to organize. Jane Hoffman suggested it was possible he was mistakenly assigned to the project when David Kelley originally brought it before the Commission.

Jane Hoffman volunteered to touch base with David Kelley to discuss screening costs, to coordinate the program with the HCA, and to spearhead all necessary promotions for the event.

12.) Schedule Next Meeting & Other Business

Jane Hoffman conveyed that David Kelley was looking for the GCC to provide a statement in opposition to the practice of hounding. Will Marlier and Chris Steel both stated that they felt this was outside of the GCC's purview, and that as a town entity the commission should exist for all of Greensboro's residents.

Jane Hoffman volunteered to manage the logistics of planning a bobcat/lynx program for summer 2025.

Erika Karp reported that there was some recent activity around a malfunctioning beaver deceiver in Greensboro, and expressed concern that the entire wetland had seemingly been emptied of water. Jane Hoffman provided additional context for the project, and shared that Skip Lisle and others had performed necessary repairs to the flow device. All parties agreed it was unfortunate that this took place right before a recent bout of dry weather.

Will Marlier reminded members that the GCC's next meeting will be held at 10:00 AM on Saturday, November 16th. **Will Marlier will make sure Liza Keisler receives a calendar invite to that meeting, and is added to other GCC correspondence.**

Erika Karp raised the point that an annual report will need to be submitted to the town soon, and **Will Marlier volunteered to look into that process, write, and submit the report.**

13.) Adjourn