



Minutes

General Commission Meeting
10:00 a.m. Saturday, January 11th, 2025

Present

Emily Cayer, *Advisor*
Clive Gray, *Member*
Jane Hoffman, *Treasurer*
Liza Keisler, *Member*
Will Marlier, *Clerk*
Linda Shatney, *Member*
Chris Steel, *Chair*

Absent

Erika Karp, *Member*
David Kelley, *Member*
Peter Watkinson, *Member*

1.) **Meeting Commences**

Will Marlier brought to the commission's attention that Erika Karp had informed him that with the beginning of the new year, new public meeting laws were now in effect. The commission agreed that in order to be in compliance with the new laws, the meeting should be recorded via Zoom and then posted to the town website for at least 30 days. The meeting after this point was recorded electronically.

2.) Will Marlier: **Review & Approve Minutes** of the Meeting on Nov. 16th, 2024

Will Marlier requested any brief updates on outstanding actions from the previous meeting. Chris Steel shared that he had confirmed that the Hardwick Conservation Commission's natural resource inventory (NRI) had cost them \$15,000.00. It was also reiterated that a logo designed by Will Marlier had been adopted by the commission by consensus during the interim. It can now be viewed from the town website.

Will Marlier agreed to follow up with Rachel Kane to inquire broadly about future collaboration between the Hardwick and Greensboro Conservation Commissions as well as specifically about the source of the HCC's funding for their tree planting project.

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

Although the physical prints of the treasurer's report were outdated, Jane Hoffman informed the commission that the commission's net assets stood at \$2,523.09 as of 12/31/24.

Jane Hoffman volunteered to send the updated numbers to the rest of the commission after the meeting.

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

Will Marlier reported that he had met with Select Board's liaison to the road crew, MacNeil. MacNeil had indicated an interest and capacity for the road crew to collaborate with the GCC. This collaboration would likely be in the form of reporting the location of any identified species to GCC members and additional care in road maintenance around identified outbreak sites.

Liza Keisler recommended that the road crew be trained on identifying Knotweed, Phragmites (Common Reeds), and Bittersweet. She stated that the first two species seemed to be immediate and established threats, and while Bittersweet is not nearly as prevalent, it provides an opportunity to curb the spread of an invasive species that is still in the early stages of introduction.

Despite concerns about roadside mowing as a potential vector for invasive plant materials, Will Marlier informed the commission that Greensboro contracts its mowing to an outside organization that would be unlikely to change its practices.

Will Marlier will put together a package of information regarding the identification and management of the three priority species, as well as potential methods for cutting down on their spread. He will present this to MacNeil, and if he and the roadcrew are amenable the information will be presented in person by GCC members. Liza Keisler and Chris Steel both indicated interest in participating in this presentation.

Will Marlier shared that he had contacted Luke Hardt in reference to invasive species management in Greensboro. Luke had indicated that without an onsite visit it would be difficult to determine an exact quote for the work. He offered that it typically cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000 to complete a single site. Luke stated that he would make himself available to the GCC in the upcoming 2025 season should his help be requested. Will Marlier will follow up in an attempt to get an hourly rate, as well as reach out to other prospective contractors.

In regards to signage, Will Marlier shared that he had reached out to Noah Hoffman of the VT Agency of Natural Resources to inquire about the term “invasive” species. Noah thoughtfully replied that, while the term itself is not considered to be loaded, it is always important to use scientific non-inflammatory language when pursuing species management. Noah recommended not using nationality or place of origin unnecessarily when discussing the issue. For instance, “Knotweed” in place of “Japanese Knotweed”.

With this in mind, Will Marlier designed new iterations of the signage at both the Highland Lodge invasive management site and the Bend Pollinator Pathway. He will share them both with GCC members to receive additional feedback.

Chris Steel volunteered to follow up with the Craftsbury Conservation Commission to learn where they received the funding to manage Knotweed around Little Hosmer Pond.

5.) Liza Keisler: **Pollinator Pathway**

Chris Steel shared that he and Liza Keisler met with Mike Kiernan of Bee the Change. Chris explained that the organization is based in Vermont and has supported the creation of over 60 pollinator beds across the state. He hopes that Mike will be able to provide long term resources and advice while Liza continues to spearhead the short term efforts and implementation. Chris shared that he had informed Zoryan Gray and the Pollinator Friendly Greensboro group about plans to meet with Mike in the second week of April, they will now be attending.

Liza Keisler showed the commission an early design/palette of what types of flowers she would like to use in the space. She recommended increasing the project’s budget in order to purchase some flower plugs from a local nursery. While this would improve the success rate of the flowers, Liza acknowledged that some volunteerism to pull weeds over the first few seasons would still be

necessary. The commission voted unanimously to increase the project's budget to \$600.00 in order to fund the purchase of flower plugs.

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

Emily Cayer reported that her ArcGIS subscription had lapsed and she was unable to produce maps with the overlays of camera locations and wildlife corridors. She will bring those maps to the meeting in March.

Will Marlier and Jane Hoffman will provide Emily with the coordinates of their camera locations.

Emily Cayer will contact Jim Sutton to receive the exact locations of his cameras.

Chris Steel indicated that there had been some interest in participating in the program from Sean Hill, although someone else would have to monitor the cameras.

Chris Steel will follow up with Jens Hilke at the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources in hopes of learning more about wildlife corridors and tracking populations via camera traps. He will also reference a conversation Will Marlier had with Jens regarding mapping NRI's at ANR's Municipal Day.

7.) Chris Steel: **Website Content & Updates**

Chris Steel reported that he had overseen some substantial changes to the GCC's webpage. They essentially updated and clarified the information available on the page in hopes of creating more transparency for Greensboro residents. Jane Hoffman and Will Marlier had reviewed and approved these changes.

Chris Steel mentioned that Maya from the Town Offices had been incredibly helpful in transferring administrative powers to him so that he can now update the webpage and calendar without requiring more work of the Town Offices staff.

Chris Steel provided some historical context for the 2019 Moore Report (NRI) that was originally commissioned by the Greensboro Land Trust. He explained that the GCC is directed by statute to produce and maintain an NRI for the town, and that Greensboro is lucky to benefit from the conservation efforts of multiple organizations. He requested that the GCC include a link on their webpage to that report.

Will Marlier recommended that there be a section on the web page dedicated to providing links to *any* relevant conservation work being done in Greensboro (including but not limited to the 2019 NRI). The commission voted in favor of this, and Chris Steel volunteered to implement this on the web page.

8.) Emily Cayer, Jane Hoffman & David Kelley: **Wild Cats Program**

Jane Hoffman and Emily Cayer reported that the program had been scheduled for August, Sunday 24th, 2025. They will meet to discuss further planning.

Chris Steel encouraged members to follow the instagram account *ericperkins72*, which belongs to a Woodsbury resident who posts excellent wildlife cam footage.

The conversation then pivoted to GCC membership. Jane Hoffman expressed that David Kelley may be contemplating resigning from his position on the commission, and Chris Steel stated that he would reach out to David to discuss this directly. Clive Gray suggested that he would be willing to resign from the commission if there was a need for an additional vacancy.

9.) Liza Keisler: **Charlie Reinertson - Northern Peatlands**

Liza Keisler reported that she had contacted Charlie Reinertson, and that he was enthusiastic about the idea of setting something up. He had indicated that Sunday, October 12th would be a good day for him.

Liza shared that Charlie had expressed an interest in putting on a hootenanny as well, and Chris Steel recommended that the GCC remain focused on solely the peatlands presentation, while the HCA could pursue a hootenanny if they were so inclined to do so.

Emily Cayer shared that she had attended an excellent webinar from the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier in the summer of 2023. Liza Keisler will contact them to see if they had any materials the GCC might utilize for Charlie's presentation (like maps of local peatlands).

Liza Keisler will also work with Peter Watkinson to conduct further coordination of the event with the Highland Center for the Arts.

The commission voted unanimously to approve \$200.00 in compensation for Charlie Reinertson's peatland presentation.

10.) Linda Shatney & Jane Hoffman: **Rodenticide**

Linda Shatney expressed concern regarding the use of rodenticides in Greensboro, and inquired about the possibility of installing a town wide resolution similar to the pollinator resolution of 2024.

Chris Steel suggested that the 2025 Town Meeting was likely too soon, and that it might be preferable to plan for introducing a resolution at the 2026 Town Meeting. He recommended planning activities and community engagement throughout 2025 to gradually build up to the eventual resolution. Linda Shatney and Jane Hoffman agreed to discuss this further and make plans for these types of rodenticide awareness events.

Will Marlier provided some context for how SGAR's (Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticide) work and impact local wildlife populations. He shared that SGAR's are the most potent commercially available strain of rodenticide, and have negative health impacts for secondary and tertiary consumers of the poison as well (fisher, fox, bobcats, birds of prey).

Liza Keisler shared that she was concerned landowners may be entirely unaware of the effects of the chemicals they are using on their own properties.

11.) Chris Steel & Will Marlier: **Greensboro NRI**

Chris Steel shared that he had spoken with John Cannon, the president of the Greensboro Land Trust, about conducting additional fieldwork and updating the 2019 Moore report.

Will Marlier shared that the most recent GLT meeting explored this possibility, and that there was general interest in commissioning additional work. The conversation also explored the potential of getting involved in Greensboro's housing crisis. There was some discussion of funding (in part) an exploratory report by the planning commission to identify ideal locations for development. Will Marlier expressed hope that doing so in conjunction with updating the NRI would create a holistic view of where development should and should not happen in Greensboro.

Will Marlier and Chris Steel will continue to work with the Greensboro Land Trust to make progress on this.

12.) **Schedule Next Meeting & Other Business**

Linda Shatney volunteered to run a GCC table at Town Meeting, and will follow up with Kim Greaves to coordinate that.

Chris Steel shared that he will try to attend a Hardwick Conservation Commission meeting prior to the next GCC meeting.

Will Marlier will follow up with Maya from the Town Offices to submit this meeting's electronic recording and minutes.

Meetings will be held at 10:15 AM going forward, to allow more time for set up. The next meeting will be on Saturday, March 15th.

13.) **Adjourn**