



Minutes

General Commission Meeting
10:15 a.m. Saturday, March 15th, 2025

Present

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

Absent

None

Members of the Public

Colin Netzley (CCC)
JoAnn Hanowski

1.) Meeting Commences with Acknowledgement of David Kelley's Service

Members expressed an appreciation of David Kelley's long service to the Greensboro Conservation Commission and presented him with a signed card and fly fishing book. David indicated that he planned to continue his work at the Highland Center for the Arts and hoped to continue collaborating with the GCC in that capacity.

Chris Steel shared with the commission that Clive Gray had just announced his retirement from the GCC as well.

2.) Will Marlier: Review & Approve Minutes of the Meeting on Jan. 11th, 2025

a.) Progress on Actions

Chris Steel shared that he had followed up with the Hardwick Conservation Commission and learned that their urban tree planting grant was providing funds for the purchase and installation of trees for ~\$1,000 a piece. Greensboro would not be eligible to apply for the same program.

After a brief discussion, Will Marlier volunteered to follow up with the Town Offices regarding the posting of Zoom meeting recordings. This is in an attempt to operate in accordance with Vermont's open meeting laws.

Will Marlier confirmed that all GCC meetings through the end of 2025 will begin at 10:15 AM, not 10:00 AM. This allows more time for meeting set-up.

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

a.) AVCC Dues

Jane Hoffman provided a brief report on the commission's financial status. Net assets as of 3/5/2025 were \$2,297.31. She indicated that this number did not yet reflect the \$3,000.00 appropriation confirmed at last week's Town Meeting. She also confirmed that the GCC was paid up in terms of AVCC dues.

4.) Colin Netzley: **Craftsbury Conservation Commission**

Colin Netzley, the Chair of the Craftsbury Conservation Commission, was in attendance. He shared that the CCC is primarily focused on community engagement and outreach at this time. They have implemented social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook. They are exploring educational opportunities to implement this year.

Colin Netzley also shared that the CCC is conducting an invasive management demonstration project at the outlet of Little Hosmer pond on Japanese Knotweed. The project is funded by a VT Fish & Wildlife Department grant, and relies heavily on volunteer labor. Many of these volunteers are sourced from Sterling College. Colin clarified that the grant is primarily concerned with preventing erosion and restoring habitat.

Colin Netzley expressed that the CCC receives no funding from the Town of Craftsbury, and that standards handed down by the Craftsbury's Selectboard regarding Vermont's new Open Meeting Laws made collaboration difficult. He shared that they were told any conversation, even between just two members, needed to be properly warned and recorded. Will Marlier and Jane Hoffman expressed that this was contrary to their

understanding of the law, which is that a quorum of a majority of members is required for Open Meeting Law to apply.

Liza Keisler shared that she was aware of State resources for Conservation Commissions that included onboarding materials and instructional videos. She volunteered to distribute these materials to other members.

Chris Steel expressed that he hoped there would be more collaboration between nearby towns (Greensboro, Hardwick, and Craftsbury) going forward, and that would hopefully create more robust volunteer coalitions capable of completing projects in all surrounding towns.

There was some brief discussion regarding Jim Sawyer, the Chair of the Eligo Lake Association, and that lake's longstanding millfoil infestation. Members recommended educational signage as one useful measure that might be taken at boat landings and noted that eradication of the Milfoil after decades of presence would likely be both extremely expensive and difficult to achieve success.

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

Will Marlier shared that he had drafted a letter to Greensboro's Road Crew liaison, MacNeil, and was awaiting feedback from other commission members before sending it. It includes recommendations for possible reporting of roadside knotweed, establishment of a town "bio-contaminated" dump site, native seed mixes, and other further collaboration between the GCC and Road Crew. Will Marlier will follow up in order to receive feedback on the letter.

Will Marlier also shared the "final" designs for both the demonstration management site at the Highland Lodge and the pollinator habitat at the Rail Trail. Members shared general feedback, and a few small adjustments were made and/or agreed upon for each sign. After adjustments are made, Will Marlier will send the final designs to Chris Steel. Will Marlier will also inquire with Kim Greaves about the need for permitting (due to the location's proximity to a town road).

Chris Steel will provide the designs to a sign manufacturer for a quote.

Chris Steel shared that he had been in touch with Dr. Walter Poleman of UVM's Ecology Lab to schedule a call to discuss his work on invasives, and the role of summer interns in managing them.

Will Marlier had no update regarding the potential hiring of contractors for invasive management. Will Marlier will approach contractors and report back with quotes/further information at the next meeting.

JoAnn Hanowski expressed interest in biocontrol methods for knotweed. Liza Keisler expressed interest in utilizing the iNaturalist app for town wide collection of invasive species. Colin Netzley shared that Craftsbury has used iNaturalist to compile any species identified within town boundaries.

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

Liza Kesler shared that she will be purchasing plugs for the site soon, that the site seems to be in good condition, and that she is planning on another meeting with her Bee the Change contact soon.

Liza Keisler expressed interest in the implementation of a native seed library at the site once flowers have been established. The commission voted in favor of purchasing one for \$200, and Liza will reach out to Dan Predpall to confirm that installing a seed library would be alright.

Erika Karp expressed concern that the Bend Revitalization Initiative has not been included in the discussion of this site enough. After some discussion, Chris Steel agreed to update Jane Johns and Nancy Hill of the BRI on the GCC's plans for the pollinator habitat at the Rail Trail.

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

Emily Cayer reported that she has been in touch with VT Fish & Wildlife's Jens Hilke in regards to Greensboro's wildlife crossing/tracking program. She provided a written one-page document that summarized his recommendations for a 3-step wildlife monitoring program. Briefly summarized, the 3 steps would be... **1: Wildlife Camera Monitoring - 2: Wildlife Road Tracking - 3: Culvert & Bridge Monitoring.**

Emily Cayer will search for additional grant funding to purchase new cameras and provide camera "kits" that include cameras, batteries, SD cards, and instructions on how to get started.

Chris Steel will send Emily Cayer information on the AVCC Tiny Grant.

David Kelley expressed concern that this program may unintentionally provide hunters and trappers with the necessary information to further damage local wildlife populations. Chris Steel and Emily Cayer reiterated that no specific locations will be shared, in hopes of protecting wildlife from recreational hunters and trappers.

David Kelley offered to donate his camera trap to Emily Cayer for this program.

Emily Cayer shared that the Vermont Land Trust is writing an article about the presence and monitoring of fisher on Emily's property, which recently installed a conservation easement on it. She asked for permission to share language regarding the GCC's wildlife monitoring program with VLT, and Chris Steel agreed it would be accurate and appropriate to do so.

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

Emily Cayer and Jane Hoffman shared that they had approached one potential speaker who declined the offer. The second speaker they approached, Susan Morse, sounded much more interested. Susan Morse would provide a program entitled "*The Cougar Returns to the East*". Interest was expressed in doing this as a sort of "movie night" at the Highland Center for the Arts.

Jane Hoffman will approach Keisha at the HCA to discuss scheduling further.

Emily Cayer will design a poster/flyer for the event.

Jane Hoffman will confirm Susan Morse's fee.

Chris Steel will update the website with the event information when the date is confirmed and the flyer is complete.

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

Liza Keisler confirmed that Mr. Reinertson will be speaking at the HCA on October 12th.

Liza Kesiler will coordinate the display of his photography in the HCA beforehand, and will attain more information regarding a potential "hootenanny" the night before.

Chris Steel will update the website with the event information when the flyer is complete.

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

Linda Shatney and Jane Hoffman shared that they had been in touch with John Schweiser, member of the VT Audubon board, and that he had provided them with additional information regarding the impacts of rodenticide on bird populations.

Jane Hoffman shared that California had recently passed a law that banned the usage of almost all rodenticides.

Jane Hoffman volunteered to draft a town resolution for 2026 that would state an intent to limit the usage of rodenticides in Greensboro.

Chris Steel requested that Linda Shatney and Jane Hoffman look into implementing public programming on rodenticide prior to the 2026 Town Meeting.

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

Chris Steel reported that the Greensboro Land Trust's Chair, John Cannon, had approached Dawn Morgan & Rick Morrill about the possibility of completing the field portion of Greensboro's NRI. There is also the possibility of rehiring the original biologist, Jesse Mohr.

Chris indicated that he had mentioned to John Cannon at GLT that the most GCC could contribute an updated NRI would likely be better \$1000. This would need to be confirmed by a GCC vote at our next meeting if required..

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

The commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Greensboro Selectboard that JoAnn Hanowski serve the remainder of David Kelley's term on the Greensboro Conservation Commission.

There was some discussion about this year's bird walks, and Chris Steel recommended hiring Bridget Butler to come back and lead another "slow birding" event. A vote confirming the allocation of \$400 + mileage for this event was passed electronically after the in-person meeting had concluded.

13.) **Adjourn**