



Minutes

Special Commission Meeting
9:00 a.m. Friday, August 28th, 2026

Present

Chris Steel, Chair
Emma Palumbo, Clerk
Jane Hoffman, Treasurer
JoAnn Hanowski, Co-Chair
Peter Watkinson, Member
Betsy Youngman, Member

Absent

Emily Cayer, Advisor
Liza Kiesler, Member
Erika Karp, Member
Will Marlier, Member

Members of the Public

Pieter Van Loon(Remote)

1.) 9:02 am- Meeting Commences

2.) Review VLT Mud Pond Conservation Project - Pieter Van Loon

Chris reordered the agenda to allow Pieter to present first. Pieter previously presented the project to the Selectboard, which deferred issuing a statement of support until the Conservation Commission reviewed it. Pieter summarized the Mud Pond Conservation Project, which seeks Federal Forest Legacy Program funding through the Vermont Land Trust (VLT). The easement will guarantee permanent public access, enable trail connections to adjacent parcels, and permit forestry, recreation, and hunting.

In response to Emma's question on the project timeline, Pieter noted the application involves multiple review rounds taking up to three years, with VLT incorporating feedback each cycle to improve its ranking. JoAnn asked how public input will shape future trail and recreational development. Pieter stated VLT will manage the parcel

similarly to the Mud Pond area and leverage the site for education and public outreach on climate-resilient forest management.

Following discussion, the Commission voted on two formal actions. Chris moved to revise the draft letter to convey a stronger statement of support from the Conservation Commission and return it to Pieter. Jane seconded, and all members present approved. Chris then moved to forward the revised letter and supporting materials to the Selectboard with a summary statement of support from the Commission. JoAnn seconded, and all members present approved.

3.) **Review and Approve** a [letter](#) to the VT Fish & Wildlife Board regarding the proposed Black Bear Hunting Season Extension

Jane reviewed petitions before the VT Fish & Wildlife Board proposing a two-tag limit and extending black bear hunting into mid-December. She noted the season extension creates conflicts with bear denning schedules. Emma and Jane prepared a draft letter opposing the extension for member review prior to the meeting. Chris moved to approve the letter, amended to include the names of all approving members at the bottom. JoAnn seconded, and all members present approved. Jane will finalize the letter to reflect the amendment and submit to VT Fish & Wildlife.

4.) 9:36 am- **Adjourn**