

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD  
BLACK RIVER COFFEE BAR – 3 MAIN STREET  
REGULAR CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
SATURDAY, January 4, 2025**

---

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL**

Chair, Carrie Kellow, called the meeting to order at 11:44 am. Roll Call was taken.

**Conservation Committee Members:** Chair Carrie Kellow, Vice Chair Geetu Melwani, Hallie Whitcomb, Chuck Gregory, and Nathaniel Ells were present in-person. Heidi Trimbach was not present.

**Public in attendance:** Ev Ruch

**Action Items:**

Chuck Gregory: Reach out to the Rotary to inquire about sponsoring a bench for the hillside area.

Nathaniel Ells: Develop a proposal for signage on the hillside and explore funding options, such as the AVCC (Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions) tiny grants.

Hallie Whitcomb: Contact the hospital administration to request no-mow months on the hillside below the knitting house.

The Committee (as a whole):

- Plan Earth Day events and activities, including outreach to local schools.
- Review the AVCC needs assessment survey and provide a response.

Carrie Kellow: Schedule the next meeting at the library and reserve the library space.

**B. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

Nathaniel Ells provided the following updates:

1. He is going to check on the status of the urban forest training from the Vermont urban forester Zoom call.
2. He mentioned the SMART goals for the Select Board that were discussed at the December 7th meeting. He suggested the committee could work with the Select Board to incorporate a conservation-related SMART goal, potentially based on the town plan.
3. He mentioned the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (ABCC) had reached out about membership and potential small grants. He wanted to look into whether the committee could get a commission membership and explore if they are eligible for the ABCC's tiny grants.
4. He said the ABCC had sent a needs assessment survey that they would like each commission to fill out, and he emailed the link to the committee.
5. He completed the prospectus for the environmental leadership training Unit 2 and forwarded it to the committee email account, along with the Unit 1 prospectus.

Hallie Whitcomb provided the following updates:

1. She reported that the meeting with the school principals about the outdoor classrooms was good, but it was a bit unclear how the committee could specifically help. She suggested connecting directly with the principals at each school to let them know the committee is interested in supporting their efforts.
2. She mentioned speaking with the principal at Riverside about the hillside between the upper and lower school levels, which is partly town-owned and partly school-owned. She thought this could be a good project for the committee to bring up with the Select Board, as an example of an area that doesn't need constant mowing and could be turned into a pollinator-friendly space.
3. Hallie said she plans to meet with Taylor Drinker from the Chamber of Commerce to discuss ways the committee and Chamber could work together.
4. She also mentioned wanting to connect with the Garden Club to see how they could potentially collaborate on projects.

Geetu Melwani provided the following updates:

1. She mentioned that Heidi Trimbach had signed up for the environmental leadership training, though it was unclear if that was confirmed.
2. She had a discussion with a group of her friends who had been talking about doing a community garden project to help support unhoused people in the area. Geetu thought this could be a potential project for the committee to get involved in.
3. She mentioned Vern Cope, who lives on Commonwealth, and has a small garden that the committee could potentially work with or use as an example.

**C. MINUTES**

1. Regular Conservation Committee Meeting - November 16, 2024
2. Regular Conservation Committee Meeting – December 6, 2024

**MOTION: Chuck Gregory moved to approve the minutes as printed and distributed with revisions.**

**Seconded by: Chair Carrie Kellow**

Carrie Kellow mentioned that she needed to make a correction to the December 7th meeting minutes. Specifically, she needed to add that Geetu Melwani opened the meeting at 11:43am, which Carrie had not included originally.

Geetu Melwani requested to add the last name of the Commonwealth resident (Vern Cope) to the minutes.

**Vote: 6-0, unanimous, recognizing Heidi Trimbach as absent**

Heather Frahm and Tara Chase were present at the Black River Coffee Bar and made an introduction to the Conservation Committee members.

**D. ANY REQUESTED ADDITIONS TO THIS AGENDA**

No requested additions to the agenda at the time of the meeting.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**ITEM #1** Planning for Spring Projects

The committee discussed the following ideas for Spring projects:

1. Getting a bench for the hillside area:

- The group discussed reaching out to Rotary to inquire about sponsoring a bench.

2. Signage for the hillside:

- The group discussed developing a proposal for signage, potentially using AVCC tiny grants to fund it.

3. Continued seeding, planting, and maintenance of the hillside:

- The group wanted to continue efforts to improve and maintain the hillside area.

4. Potentially planning events or picnics at the hillside:

- The group discussed the idea of hosting community events or picnics at the hillside to encourage more engagement.

5. Planning for Earth Day activities and events:

- Coordinating with local schools to involve students
- Conducting community outreach and information tables
- Distributing seed packets, potentially sunflower seeds, to elementary schools

6. Conducting a community goals survey:

- Using an online survey tool to capture community feedback and priorities
- Seen to raise awareness about the committee and get email contacts for future outreach

**E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM PROPOSALS**

The committee discussed the following items as future agenda item proposals:

**Planning for spring projects:**

- Getting a bench for the hillside area
- Signage for the hillside
- Continued seeding, planting, and maintenance of the hillside

- Potentially planning events or picnics at the hillside to get more community engagement

**Planning for Earth Day activities and events:**

- Coordinating with local schools to involve students
- Potential community outreach and information tables
- Distributing seed packets, potentially sunflower seeds, to elementary schools

Conducting a community goals survey:

- Discussed using an online survey tool to capture community feedback and priorities
- Seen to raise awareness about the committee and get email contacts for future outreach

**Reviewing the AVCC needs assessment survey as a committee:**

- Going through the survey questions together and providing a response

**F. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment at the time of the meeting.

**J. ADJOURN**

**MOTION: Chair Carrie Kellow moved to adjourn the meeting.**

**Seconded by: Nathaniel Ells**

**Vote: 6-0, unanimous, recognizing Heidi Trimbach as absent**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary