

Charlemont Conservation Commission
July 17th, 2025, 7:00 PM
Via conference call and in person, Town Hall
Meeting Minutes

Members Participating: Bill Harker, Thorne Palmer, Andrea Santos

Others Participating: Sheila Litchfield, Budge Litchfield, Star Atkeson

Thorne Palmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Appointments:

7:00 PM Sheila Litchfield to speak about starting Japanese Knotweed management along the Deerfield and surrounding wetlands.

- Sheila and Budge Litchfield gave an overview of the Japanese Knotweed problem and their vision for a multi-town management program along the Deerfield and along the road and near brooks. The knotweed has gotten out of control since Hurricane Irene. They learned that a lot of gravel had become contaminated and HWY departments were unwittingly spreading it.
- Budge and Sheila had given the ConComm a link to a video about the Mad River Valley knotweed project in Vermont, a few handouts about knotweed, including their written presentation to the concomm— the idea to follow Mad River Valley's lead.
- Sheila said the Charlemont Federated Church will sponsor an educational gathering, to get interested parties informed and to develop a management plan. UMass Amherst, UVM, Deerfield River Watershed Association could be a part of it. Hawlemont could be the priority project.
- Shelburne HWY is doing some of the Knotweed management for Shelburne.
- They spoke about people managing invasives in Greenfield at the Green River.
- They suggest the Concomms of the 14 Towns of the watershed to be involved, believing the commission has key role in getting the word out, as they did in Vermont.
- Randy Prostack is a local resource (UMass invasives expert)
- Vermont Land trust and ConComm chairs were the ones who gave them the information about knotweed and the project. Charlemont Forum is potentially interested. GIS mapping would be beneficial, which could be facilitated by UMass.

Action items:

1. Review / Approve Minutes from June 12, 2025

Bill Harker made a motion to approve the June 12th Minutes as written. Thorne Palmer seconded the motion. All in favor.

2. 180 8A update

- Brian has moved some of the cars, less, but still a lot. They are consolidating scrap, Doug Annear is still coming twice a week, and he is a hard worker. The price of scrap has gone down. They are still cleaning and trying but Brian is doing other work to pay the bills. Thorne wants to talk about an extension and suggested giving another year to continue to get cars out every month.
- The Board went over the situation again, about how it got to the way it is, and the problem of having cars without titles. There is a process, though, putting an ad in the paper to release the car. It's a lot of paperwork.
- There is a water out in the field, a pond made by the brook. Thorne will find out where the water is. There are a lot more cars than they thought.
- The board brainstormed actions to take. They are happy that he is working with them and has made more progress than in previous attempts, but they are disappointed that he is showing less motivation now that the price of steel and scrap has dropped.
- They will talk to the Select board to make a plan, about a new recommendation, to reestablish the rules. They'd like him to get back to 12 cars a month. They will find out where the cars are by the river and then talk to the Select Board and come up with a new plan.
- Thorne will get on the Select Board Agenda. They will also explore companies that could pick up all the cars.

3. Tree specifications for National Grid

The Board gave Star the go ahead to ask Hawlemont principal Amber Tulloch about placing trees around Hawlemont.

They also suggested speaking to the Little Red School house Committee.

Discussion items:

1. Culvert at South River Road

Bill let the Board know he had talked to Highway about clearing the culvert. It had gotten plugged up, with the help of beavers. They cleaned it and built a new headwall.

Andrea Santos motioned to close the meeting at 8:17. Thorne Palmer seconded the motion. All in favor

Documents reviewed in meeting:

- Agenda of Jul7 17, 2025
- Minutes of June 12, 2025
- Knotweed Management in the Deerfield River Valley , Budge and Sheila Litchfield 7/17/2025
- Protect ecosystem diversity: Join the subduing knotweed collation.