

Town & Village of Woodstock
Town Selectboard & Village Trustees Special Joint Meeting
October 30th, 2025
8:00 AM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present Selectboard: Chair Ray Bourgeois, Vice Chair Susan Ford, Laura Powell, Keri Cole

Present Trustees: Chair Seton Mcilroy, Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn, Brenda Blakeman, Lisa Lawlor, Frank Horneck

Public: Wendy Spector, Stuart Mathews, Joe DiNatale, Scott Smith, Betty Ann McGuire, Mike Green, Kristen Sullivan, Seth Webb, Chris Williamson, Jess Kirby, Travis Contratto, Brittney Soos, Claire Venard, Seth Webb, Candice Contrado, Kristen Hubbell

Staff: Eric Duffy

Call to order

1. Selectboard

- a. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of October 30th to order at 8:00AM

2. Trustees

- a. Chair Seton Mcilroy called the Trustee meeting of October 30th to order at 8:00AM

B. Additions or Deletions from the posted Agenda – None

C. Vote

Vote – Date Change November Trustee Meeting

Seton Mcilroy explained that the November meeting needed to be rescheduled because it was currently set for November 11th, which is Veterans Day.

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to move the regularly scheduled November 11th meeting to November 10th at 6:00 PM. (8:02AM)

Seconded: by Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

D. Discussion

Village Conservancy

Eric Duffy opened the discussion by stating that the purpose of this agenda item was to have a robust conversation between both boards about the Woodstock Village Conservancy. He noted that the conservancy had been working in the background for about a year developing their ideas.

Wendy Spector, team leader for the Woodstock Village Conservancy, introduced several team members present at the meeting including Stuart Mathews, Scott Smith, Betty Ann McGuire, and Mike Green. She explained that they were hoping to come away from the meeting with a letter of agreement that would give them permission to engage with the

public more openly. Until now, their conversations had been restricted to private groups or small events.

The boards and the conservancy discussed various aspects of their potential relationship:

1. Regarding the relationship between the Conservancy and the municipalities, Wendy Spector explained that they envisioned working directly with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Municipal Manager. The Conservancy would provide legwork, research, information gathering, and communications with the public, while following guidance from municipal staff regarding priorities. They intended to align with the Town's goals for sustainability and Economic Development.
2. The Conservancy clarified that for public lands, they would not enter into any contracts directly. The municipality would be the signatory on any contracts, with the Conservancy helping with preparation work like finding contractors or drafting RFPs.
3. Board members raised concerns about decision-making authority and process. Wendy Spector confirmed that the Conservancy would rely on the Municipal Manager to determine when decisions needed to be presented to the boards for discussion. The boards emphasized that they often have competing priorities and the Conservancy should understand that some projects might need to be delayed due to other municipal issues.
4. Laura Powell raised a question about the Conservancy's status since they were not appointed by the boards, unlike other municipal committees. Wendy Spector explained that they were following the East End Park model and needed to maintain their independence as a philanthropic organization to raise private funds.
5. Regarding decision-making process, Wendy Spector described their approach as iterative. For their Green project, they first consulted with stakeholders, created concepts with a landscape architect, then refined those concepts. They now want board approval before taking those concepts to the public for feedback.
6. When asked about funding, Wendy Spector confirmed that their projects would be at minimal or no additional cost to the Town budget. The Conservancy would fund their work through grants and donations and would not ask for taxpayer money.
7. For maintenance of projects like tree planting, the Conservancy stated they would include maintenance planning and funding in their project plans and would work with DPW to understand what the Town currently maintains versus what would need additional attention.
8. The Conservancy mentioned that they were currently focused on the Village Green and also on "mini projects" that could be achieved more quickly and with less process. They had identified four locations in the center on Central Street where trees had been removed and could be replaced.

Board members discussed the plans with Wendy Spector, they expressed that they would need a formal written agreement with the Conservancy before any specific projects could move forward. Eric Duffy suggested that the next step would

be to create a letter of support from both municipalities outlining how they would work together.

E. Citizen Comments

Seth Webb commended Wendy Spector for her leadership and referenced his experience working for New York City Parks where conservancy partnerships had been successful. He mentioned similar successful models in cities like Houston, Boston, Greenville (South Carolina), and Bentonville.

Seth Webb commended the board on their consistent work towards infrastructure over the last several years, the creation of a Capital Plan and Economic Development. He advocated for the Selectboard to make supporting the school part of their annual objectives and to coordinate bond votes with the school to avoid competing bond measures.

Kristen Hubbell asked the Selectboard to partner with the School Board to ensure the future of Woodstock Middle & High School remains in Woodstock. She noted that state funding for school construction and renovation may soon become available, and emphasized the school's importance as a major driver in the local economy and one of the largest year-round employers.

Kristen Sullivan, a WUHS graduate with two daughters in the elementary school, expressed the importance of the School Board and Selectboard working together on the future of the middle and high school.

Candice Contrado expressed concern about potentially needing to drive her children 20-30 minutes away to school if the building does not remain in Woodstock.

F. Adjournment

Motion: by Vice Chair Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (9:01AM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to adjourn the meeting at (9:01AM)

Seconded: by Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

*Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Mears Koar*

Susan B. Ford

Raymond Bourgeois

Brenda Blakeman

Keri Cole

X

J Kahn

Frank Horneck

Lisa lawlor

Brenda Blakeman

Signature: Susan B. Ford
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