WEST TISBURY
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 20, 2026

Present: Whit Griswold, Ernie Thomas, Chris Lyons, Robert Myhill, Peter Rodegast, Noah Froh
Absent: N/A
Staff Present: Angela Luckey
Also **present for all or part of the meeting**: Caitlin Jones, Darci Schofield, Fred Fournier, Mal Jones, Mary Kuh-Ambulos (Zoom), Perry Ambulos (Zoom), Austin Fournier (Zoom), Deborah Eliason (Zoom), Elizabeth Wroblicka (Zoom), Vargas Plumbing (Zoom), Joan Malkin (Zoom), Jeremy Houser (Zoom), Sarah Glazer (Zoom)

Call to Order: Whit called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm
Approve Minutes – Minutes for Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Ernie made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Peter.
Roll call vote: Ernie-aye, Chris-aye, Peter-aye, Robert-aye, Noah-aye, Whit-aye

New Public Hearing:
Whit opened the public hearing at 5:55 pm
5:10 PM/ of Map 35 Lot 6.15: a public meeting under the requirements of G.L. Ch.131 § 40, as amended, and the West Tisbury Wetlands Protection Bylaw and regulations to consider a **Notice of Intent** filed by Vineyard Land Surveying & Engineering, Inc., on behalf of 160 Plum Bush Point Road, LLC for a project located at **160 Plum Bush Point Road,** to trim, cut and prune vegetation to improve view channels on the above-referenced property. Significant trees will remain with minor limbing/pruning, and the understory vegetation will be maintained at 48 inches.

Ernie made a motion to continue the public hearing to November 17, 2026, at 5:10 pm, for lack of representation to present the project. Peter seconded the motion.
Roll call vote: Noah-aye, Ernie-aye, Chris-aye, Peter-aye, Robert-aye, Whit-aye

New Business:
Caitlin Jones Letter of Interest to serve on the Conservation Commission

- Whit moved to recommend that the Select Board appoint Caitlin Jones as a full board member of the Conservation Commission. Ernie seconded the motion.
- Roll call vote: Ernie-aye, Chris-aye, Peter-aye, Robert-aye, Whit-aye, Noah-aye

Discussion of working group for Island-wide tick spraying regulations:

- Members from the Chilmark Conservation Commission and Vineyard Conservation Society were present for the discussion.
- The board is currently at the conceptual stage of trying to figure out how to expand the regulation of spraying beyond the existing West Tisbury Conservation Commission jurisdiction into an island-wide regulation, as prompted by a resident who attended the October 6, 2026, meeting.
- Sarah Glazer, from the Chilmark Conservation Commission, explained why the Chilmark Board of Health was countered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). Ms. Glazer also noted a court case that considered Conservation Commissions as an exception because they are protecting a resource under the Wetlands Protection Act, rather than regulating the pesticides themselves.
- The board discussed exploring how to expand the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction and purview.

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- There was a question of whether Tick Free MV promotes spraying and whether they are aware of our existing prohibition of sprays within West Tisbury Conservation Commission jurisdiction.
- This discussion was continued to the next meeting on November 17, 2026, to get more information on who might want to be involved in the working group and once again reach out to other towns to help lead the charge.

MVC CZM Grant for Vineyard Marsh Stewards Project – Stewards Meeting October 21 at 12 PM

- In relation to this grant, the Trustees of Reservation are working in partnership with Sheriff's Meadow Foundation and private landowners on Chappaquiddick to restore the Poucha Pond complex.
- The Coastal Zone Management grant received by the Martha's Vineyard Commission is an island-wide effort to protect and restore salt marshes.
- Angela will attend the meeting and share a recap of what was discussed.

Trustees of Reservation Conservation Restriction Request Preliminary Discussion

- The Trustees came before the Board as part of a Planning Board approval for an Open Space Development where the Trustees will be the owners of the open space. The Zoning Bylaw states that the open space must be held under a Conservation Restriction (CR). The Trustees are waiting to hear from the Planning Board as to whether their ownership of the open space is enough, or if a CR is still required.
- Board Questions:
    - Is it typically the town that is the holder of the CR, or the Conservation Commission?
        - It is typical in Massachusetts for Conservation Commissions to hold CRs over properties. Often the wording is the CR is held by the town, but it is in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission.
    - Why do the Trustees want to own the open space rather than be the CR holder?
        - More control over what happens on the property and can protect the land in a different way. Very interested in this land as it is within Priority Habitat and consists of 11 acres with significant habitat for rare species. There is also abutting conservation land.
    - Is the Conservation Commission liable in any way if someone is injured on the property?
        - No. The role of the CR holder is to make sure that the Trustees are held to the terms of the CR. The Trustees only intention is to manage and protect the habitat. They are interested in working with other conservation organizations to conserve globally rare grasslands and support migrating ecosystems.
    - Have they contacted any other organizations about holding the CR?
        - They had contacted Sheriff's Meadow Foundation who asked why they would want a CR over themselves.
- If the Conservation Commission agreed to hold the CR:
    - The Trustees would draft the CR based on the model state CR and send it to the state for approval. The draft would be submitted to the Conservation Commission prior to state approval to review the terms.
    - Annual monitoring would be done with the owner (Trustees) to walk the property and look for anything different from the year before and note any potential violations. The Trustees have no plans for development, and they would be the ones responsible for contacting abutters if they did anything on the open space land owned by the Trustees.
- All the land within the proposed subdivision is currently vacant. An easement would be granted from Lot 6 to access the third open space area, the other two open spaces could be accessed from the private way.
- Mr. Ambulos explained that Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) strongly influenced where the developable space was located.

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- The Board was open to holding the CR if it is required by the Planning Board.
- This discussion was continued to November 17, 2026, anticipating that the Trustees will have an answer from the Planning Board by then.

Time will be reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate:

- Application of regulations pertaining to vista pruning and view channels were brought into question by the Board.
    - Angela will provide detailed state regulations and relevant bylaw regulations to the Board for the next meeting.
- Mal Jones asked the Board to consider Jersey Barriers as an option for revetments, as they are adjustable.

Administrative:
Final review of Church Outreach handout: The Board will review the final draft and will give comments by Monday afternoon.

Meeting Schedule for November: The Board will stick with one meeting in November, on November 17, 2026.

Ernie made a motion to adjourn at 6:59 pm, seconded by Peter. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Luckey
Board Administrator

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