**RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Meeting agenda, Tuesday April 11, 2017**

**Town Center Meeting Room, 203 Bridge Street, 7:30 p.m.**

In Attendance: Judy Rosovsky, Mary Houle, Bob Low, Kristin Nelson, Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright, Rick Barrett,

Guests: Brad Elliott, Wright Preston, Fritz Martin, Lou Borie

7:30 p.m. Public comments

None

7:35 Appoint minute taker; review, amend and approve March minutes

Rick Barrett was appointed

March minutes will be approved at the Commission’s next meeting.

7:40 Additions, amendments to agenda

None

7:45 Review application for use of CRF funds towards Lake Iroquois Lake Association activities

in response to Eurasian watermilfoil; including aquatic plant inventory.

-Pat Suozzi gave an informative overview of the milfoil problem in Lake Iroquois and made herself available for questions. The items which came in question & Answer and discussion were as follows:

* Although the nature of the problem is ongoing and requires extended maintenance, the request of Richmond’s Conservation Commission (RCC) is not for funding of continuing maintenance.
* The Lake Iroquois Association (LIA) is concerned with water quality and has studied best practices for controlling the milfoil (which is an invasive species) as well as phosphate run-off. To that end, LIA raised weevils which feed on milfoil; however they reproduce slowly and can’t keep up with the invasion.

LIA’s working group has also been in contact with Lake Dunmore caretakers to take advantage of their experiences.

* A number of the RCC members believe that funding a native plant survey at and around Lake Iroquois is consistent with the Commission’s charges.
* Milfoil was originally carried into the Lake via a boat(s). The problem is further exacerbated when motor boat props cut the plant up into smaller fragments, which aids in its spreading.
* Individual homeowners have engage divers to remove milfoil; however that proved to be expensive endeavor, with disappointing results.
* A survey, conducted by an outside commercial firm in 2014, revealed that approximately 27% of native species have been squeezed from the Lake and surrounds. Approximately 70 acres of the lake is still covered in milfoil.
* LIA believes that there are two possible approaches to eradication of milfoil in the Lake. Suction harvesting and the application of herbicides.
* Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) was described as being akin to mowing lawns. It fragments the milfoil roots and disrupts the lake floor. LIA learned this during the summer of 2016, when hired an outside contractor for about 3 months, at a cost of $ 11,000. The contractor only cleared about ½ acre. This did not prove to be a viable solution; given the cost benefit ratio.
* In light of DASH’s expense, LIA is applying for an Aquatic Nuisance Grant from Vermont State. This would allow for bottom barriers to be laid in the fishing lanes, which would need to be removed on a seasonal basis.
* Although milfoil does make fairly good compost, the disposition of it is problematic. It needs to be transported to a disposal site; which cannot be done without a permit. Almost all invasives need a permit to be relocated.
* Fluridone Aquatic **Herbicide** (generic **Sonar** or Whitecap **Herbicide**) is a selective translocated aquatic **herbicide** that is absorbed through the shoots and roots of vascular plants. Fluridone is for management of vegetation in fresh water ponds, lakes reservoirs, and drainage canals.
* Although the use of herbicide is LIA last choice, that seems to be a better approach to eradication. The funds requested from RCC would not be used for the purchase or use of Sonar.
* Sonar appears to have been widely used in VT and other area water reservoirs and lakes.
* Ms. Suozzi mentioned that the Lake gets a lot of use and as such, Williston contributes approximately $ 20,000 from its General Fund and Hinesburg contributes approximately $ 30,000 from its.
* LIA is asking the RCC for $ 2,000. The Richmond Selectboard has contributed amounts ranging from $ 400 to $ 600, in the past.
* LIA would designate this contribution for use in securing a new survey to determine the effectiveness of past eradication efforts. This survey is required in order to obtain a permit for the application of Sonar. Some of the funds would also be used only for Outreach purposes.

A motion was made for the RCC to recommend that the Selectboard release RCC funds in the amount of $ 2,000 for use in Lake Iroquois’s milfoil eradication efforts. Such release to be predicated on the submission of a more complete application from LIA and the submission of the last survey report, secured by LIA.

The motion PASSED:

For: 5

Against: 1

Abstentions 0

8:15 Review application for Gillett Pond dam from Friends of Gillett Pond

-Lou Borie or other representative will attend and be available to answer questions

-Vote on motion to recommend/not recommend CRF monies for the construction of a dam and related activities at Gillett Pond

* Bob Low recused himself and left the room for the duration of the discussion.
* Lou Borie and Fritz Martin explained that the request for funding has been reduced from $200,000; down to $150,000. Although they have already submitted a completed application, they made themselves for questions.
* Construction will begin in 2018, if all things go well.
* The Friends of Gillett Pond are hoping for support from both Richmond & Huntington.
* The Engineers cited three options for a replacement dam:
  + An Earthen dam at approx. $ 730,000.
  + A Concrete Gravity dam at approx. $ 700,000.
  + A Combination dam at approx. $ 590,000.
* The dam’s design will water to flow over the top; but at a diminished velocity
* The construction will be phased; with the aesthetic façade delayed until the end of the project.
* Funding from the RCC will also be phased; in order to avoid completely draing the RCC’s reserve.
* Ibit asked about private funding. Lou mentioned that the Friends are about to go into a “quiet phase” in fund raising; in which private donors will be approached.
* Fritz mentioned that the Monitor Barn was the single most expensive project undertaken in Richmond. It came in at around $ 1M, including the land purchase.
* Wright stated that there is a need for Town support in order to attract other funding sources. The Friends are expecting a good number of small donations.
* Brad said that the Friends are looking at 4 or 5 grants. They have a good number of good grant writers, who will, hopefully, secure seed grants.

Motion: Judy made a motion to support the Gillette Pond construction, in the amount of $ 150,000. Seconded by Ibit.

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstentions 1

8:35 Updates:

FOWR Race and Ramble – RCC presence, participation, volunteers, anything?

Since the Committee is doing Green-Up, it chooses to pass.

Letter from Gretchen Alexander

The Town should determine at what point action on the river is warranted.

8:45 Discussion of latest draft of natural resources section of town plan:

There is some frustration at the amount of time it has taken for any final action to be seen. The Planning Commission seems to be somewhat obstructive, maybe in opposition to the revision. Things seems almost contentious during meetings, with a number of competing needs. The business community appears to be unwilling to accept some of the restrictions which come inherently with the preservation of Natural Resources.

Bob reminded the Committee that the absence of a Town Plan can and has had serious consequences. He’ll review the Natural Resources Section Plan with the PC and hopes that the members have done their homework and read the submissions, which they have received. It would be great if the PC could show the Town some leadership.

Claire Rock was hired to develop the Community Vision, which has been. If necessary, they could appoint a Town sanctioned body to complete the Plan.

9:00 Continued discussion of ad hoc Andrews/Town Forest management committee

It would be great to have Wright Preston involved in the Town Forest Management activities. Notwithstanding some reticent folks observations, it would seem to be a good idea to have friends and neighbors involved. Who better to care for a valuable parcel, like that ? An Ad Hoc Committee will most likely determine the final make-up of any such committee. They would be looking for the best people to hold a spot: i.e. those with the requisite talents to address forest management. The RCC could submit a list of suggested, talented folks to sit on a management body.

9:15 RCC workload – increase size or meeting frequency?

Deferred.

9:25 Matters arising

Green-Up phone tree volunteers to meet after RCC adjournment.

Bob reiterated the need for Lake Iroquois Association to submit a complete application. Pre-apps are OK; but applicants need to know that a complete application must follow any pre-app.

9:30 Adjourn