



## Andrews Forest Committee

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Andrews Forest Committee  
Richmond, Vt 05477

To: Development Review Board

The Andrews Forest Committee seeks review and approval for a Conditional Use application for the town forest parcel at 1149 East Main Street in Richmond also reflected as Lot #1 of the Andrews Farm Plat 5 lot subdivision dated 1/13/12 (attached). The parcel is located in the Agricultural/Residential (A/R) district. Per section 3.1.2m of the Richmond Zoning regulations an acceptable use within the A/R zoning district is that of an “Outdoor Recreational Facility”. As such this application request is for Conditional Use as an “Outdoor Recreational Facility” for the parcel.

The Richmond Town Forest was established in 2018. Through the generosity of the Andrews family, the Town acquired and conserved 428 acres of forestland and farmland through the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Since that time the Vermont Land Trust has established the overall “Management Plan” which includes conservation easements, and forest and ecology governance. Subsequently the ACF Committee working with the Country Forester has completed an in-depth “Forest Management Plan” (FMP). The FMP can be found on the Richmond Town website.

The ACF currently supports recreational activities such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling via a pass-thru VAST trail, hunting, snow shoeing, bird watching and the like. The character of the area is comprised of diversified forest of tree and wildlife species, scattered logging trails and various drainage streams. These characteristics are conducive to many outdoor recreational opportunities, naturalist programs and field science monitoring activities.

The ACF Committee acting as one of several governance bodies does not foresee any undue adverse affect on the community within the General Standards as well as the Specific standards of the Zoning regulations. In fact the formal review and processes in place allows for public input, oversight and approvals via the town Select Board.

One of the goals of the ACF Committee is to expand the opportunities for community use(s) of the forest. To this end two projects have been discussed and are key components being requested for review/approval as part of the Conditional Use application. These projects will be discussed in further detail below.



1. ACF Parking lot expansion - (See Plat & Sketch Plan attached)

The current parking area is defined by the access road into the parcel and an adjoining space of approximately 40ft x 20ft. This area will generally accommodate four vehicles and is constrained to allow larger vehicles such as a school bus to park. It is the intent of the committee to increase this parking space to better handle more vehicles as well as one 40 ft school bus in accordance with the National Association of Transportation Officials street design guide for buses (See attached).

The expansion project will create 1800 sq/ft of new space which includes turn around capabilities for a 40ft school bus (60'x20') as well as five new parking spaces (10'x20'). However the turnaround area for the school bus will eliminate two of the existing parking spaces. So the net increase in vehicle parking is three.

The area is also constrained by large outcrops of ledge limiting expansion of parking on the upper side. Section 8.4.5 of the Zoning Regulations allow for DRB variances. The ledge constraint is a narrowing factor in growing the parking area further and the ACF Committee requests a variance to the road front setback rule of 55 ft. the request is for 35ft which is the minimum needed to move the school bus turnaround closer to RT 2 by 20ft and allow for retention of two existing parking spaces. We feel that this meets the five facts of need outlined in the regulations.

A wetland classification report was conducted in January 2018 which identified the area having as a Class III wetland. As part of the expansion project drainage swales will be utilized to control water flows into existing drainage along the RT2 corridor.

The additional parking construction will be done by the Town Highway department in accordance with the existing standards outlined in the zoning regulations. Furthermore the Highway foremen has reviewed the outlined work scope and approved the sketch plan (See attached email) . The work is in the town budget and tentatively planned for the 2020 summer timeframe (July) pending DRB approval.

2. Phase 1 Trails - (See Sketch Plan attached)

As part of the public input for the ACF activity survey, requests for hiking and biking trails were top priorities by the community. The SE Group was an early partner working with the ACF Committee and VLT teams that helped outline areas in the forest suitable for trail development. A large number of trial and connector trails opportunities were mapped in the forest that could be developed within the constraints of existing ecological areas, logging traces, and deer wintering zones.

Affordability and timing limits the ACF Committee's ability to implement a wide network of trails. The committee determined the best course of action was to pursue trail development in phases. To this end the ACF team identified a limited trail network in the western side of of the forest parcel. Funding for a professional detailed trail plan is in progress with work anticipated to start in June.

The trail will be approximately .8 miles in length suitable for non-motorized uses with a footprint of 6-8 ft wide as needed within the slope of the terrain. An ecological assessment has been completed and no adverse effects noted to sensitive areas in the trail path. Final approvals on the design will be directed to the ACF Committee and VLT prior to construction activity. Any conditions of approval by the DRB are requested as part of this Conditional Use application.



Any preliminary questions prior to the DRB meeting can be directed to Peter Halvorsen and/or Geoff Urbanik

Sincerely yours,

Pete Halvorsen (ACF Committee Member)

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Geoff Urbanik (ACF Committee Chair)

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Attachments:

- ACF Conditional Use Application
- Andrews Farm Plat 5 lot subdivision dated 1/13/12
- ACF Forest Management Plan URL ->  
<http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Andrews-Community-Forest-MPlan-FINAL-adopted-11-19-18-small-file-size.pdf>
- ACF Parking Expansion Sketch Proposal
- ACF Phase 1 Trail Map
- National Association of City Transportation Officials Design Guide
- Town Highway Foreman ACF Parking Expansion Approval
- ACF Wetlands Classification Report
- Vermont Land Trust Orthophoto Map