

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, August 8, 2017

In attendance: Judy, Mary, Ibit and Kris;
Members of public present: Guy Roberts; Brad Elliot

July Minutes were approved

No additions or amendments to the agenda

Kristin Nelson appointed minute-taker

Updates:

Friends of Gillett Pond; There was a training on how to approach people for fund raising.

Natural resource section of Town Plan; The Planning Commission is going over suggestions to make sure all sections make sense. Bob Lowe and Brad Elliot are the architects of the Natural Resource report for Richmond.

Tree Planting Efforts – next steps?

At the last meeting Ibit agreed to work with Jon Kart on drafting a letter to possible interested parties: Ibit reported having called and left a message for Jon but had not heard back.

Mary suggested that a combined effort in the Spring might be beneficial. Guy said he had walked the trail recently and noticed the development of a gravel bar/island that appears to be putting additional pressure on and undercutting the shoreline – he suggested we visit the site as a group as a visual would add clarity to the issue.

There was additional discussion regarding the rip-rap approach, Gretchen's comprehensive letter, and steps that need to be taken before rip-rap is installed.

Judy mentioned the Friends of Winooski's Watershed Management Plan being formed . . . we need to be more conscious of consequences that may be caused by the various actions that have been suggested.

Guy said there is information on 'river dynamics' with the Regional Planning Commission. He mentioned Marie Thomas and FEMA.

Andrews Farm/Town Forest Management Plan meeting – update:

The VLT received a large federal grant for the purchase, so as agreed only \$75,000 was needed from the Richmond Conservation Fund. Bob Heiser of VLT would like an additional \$60,000 for parking and other specifics. RCC members agreed that it would require a separate application for funds to the RCC, since these particular specifics were not part of the original application for funds. Someone suggested the needs might actually be met by other available grants, rather than drain the RCF.

No proposal was made to recommend action on this to the Selectboard.

Following are notes of the discussion that ensued:

Judy reported on a quick meeting with Trails committee representatives. The Town of Richmond, through the offices of the RCC received a \$10,000 UCF grant for consultants to develop a recreation plan for the proposed Town Forest. Mary volunteered to talk to Kate Forrer regarding current use by Don Tobi, a forester who now works for GMPC. Brad suggested Sue Miller. Ethan Tapper had suggested taking the land out of the Current Use Program. Foresters say mountain biking is counter to sustainability. Zones of use were suggested. Use is partially bound by the UCF grant and by conservation easement with VLT.

The Select Board needs to approve any governing committees. VAST issues; monitoring use; involving mt. biking group(s). Brad suggested using the baseline of “do no harm”. VYCC involvement for building trails– make it clear that if mt. biking not following rules, they are out. Guy spoke to the trail network for biking and their goal of connecting existing trails. Matt Leonard and FPR Commissioner Mike Snyder recommended making it clear at the outset what the consequences are for violations. Discussion re starting with baseline but management committee will include representatives from all groups.

Strong need for “before trails formed” baseline assessment done.

Other issues: the existing road is used by farmers for getting tractors to fields – some agreement needs to be made with reference to the maintenance of that road including responsibility by farmers. Will camping be allowed? Sanitation?

Bob Heiser submitted a memo of understanding that was approved by Select Board with the town.

Ibit said the Randolph NH town forest was lovely, with interpretive information – need for identification of special places. Guy talked about the VT mt. biking association and their guidelines.

A management plan (or draft of) is required for the federal recreation grant by four months after the closing on purchase of the property (If December closing then by April). Need to get interested parties together. Mary will talk to Don Tobi re cost of assessment. VLT enforces parameters of conservation easement guiding purposes on an annual basis.

We had a list of suggestions for the Select Board as to who should be on the committee.

Need unity amongst ourselves and develop a vision for this forest with guiding purposes. Different aspects of our town forest – orienteering – Keeping Track org. – topo map – pack in, pack out policy – ask Clare Rock who pays for assessment.

428 acres – create Steps and Concerns. Guy – create Andrews Forest Program for i-naturalist.com to involve public – anything to increase literacy of people – organizing foresters – a learning place – Jens Hilke of VT Fish & Wildlife – connectivity – Forest Parks & Rec. – Kate Forrer UCF – so many contacts – designate bits for assessment?

As there were no other matters arising, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09pm.

