

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 14, 2017
Minutes

RCC Members in Attendance: Mary Houle, Bob Low, Kristin Nelson, Judy Rosovsky and Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright

No additions or amendments to the agenda

Kristin Nelson appointed minute-taker

Willis Hill Stewardship Committee; Lou Borie, Amy Powers, Derek ____, Jeremy Hoff, Mark Carbone (not present), and Kristin Nelson (RCC rep).

The Willis Hill parcel was acquired in 2014, partially funded by a grant; Lou presented the first official management plan as required by the grant and conservation easement on the land which requires public input – this presentation to a public meeting of the RCC fulfills that requirement.

Amy reported on the academic and recreational use survey; the response was enthusiastic with 90% responding that they would use the property. Concerns from the survey regarded trail connectivity, bathroom facilities and parking. Goals and usage include sledding, education, hiking, elementary and community activities. There is a current wetland survey by Arrowwood and a wetland permit is in hand.

Ibit suggested the property also presents projects for UVM environmental students/internships as well as Cecilia Danks and her group of students and an opportunity to learn grant writing. Current use includes 4 Winds __?__ program, sledding, 7th & 8th grades of CHMS investigating inventory and tracking, and making recommendations for trails. An aside: hearing from Ann Smith, dir. of Friends of the Winooski River, may provide pertinent information regarding a possible stormwater mitigation study being proposed for the CHMS and elementary school parcel which is contiguous with and uphill from the Willis Hill parcel – Judy will contact Ann on this.

Larry Montague, director of communications outreach for Friends of the Winooski River, presented information on the June 4th Onion River Race and Ramble (4th annual – rain or shine), a 10&1/2 mile paddle from Bolton dam to the Richmond pavilion. He made suggestions on how to get the town more involved and make it a community event, with proceeds going to protect the Winooski watershed. Last year there were 135 participants and more are expected this year. Green Mountain Power is contacted for dam release. There has been no feed-back regarding take-out/access in Richmond being OK or not, according to Larry. As there have been serious erosion issues, this prompted some related conversation: Bob said the rip-rap solution suggested by Chris Brunell (river management with the state) was not necessarily a good idea; Judy had some breaking news - Karen

Bates, basin planner with DEC is calling for a group meeting with river people to come together and brainstorm on solutions for Winooski erosion.

Bob said to check with the Arrowood group as to what would work; Mary suggested having a plant list for riverside restoration (someone from Intervale has this?). Ibit thanked Larry for his encompassing work that adds value to place and the people who live in it. Back to outreach, Larry wants to see more educational elements incorporated. He handed out amazing waterproof maps of the Winooski Watershed with points of interest for us to purchase. Regarding the race, Ibit raised the question about posting information on paddling safety.

Updates:

Article on Catamounts: All good

TimesInk blurbs: Heidi Racht idea to retitle the column, "Our Changing Landscape" – all agreed.

Andrews Forestland presentation at Selectboard Mtg: several of us attended

Winooski erosion: Judy will send around Karen Bates' email suggesting there is no practical economic solution and calling for a group meeting of concerned river people to come together and brainstorm.

Lake Iroquois control of invasives: Mary said outreach and education is needed, including cleaning boats - \$1,000 from RCF would help.

Gillett Pond update: all agreed that Judy does not need to recuse herself for the vote.

Kristin presented information on the Conway School for Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design (of Conway MA) as an economical, professionally backed graduate student resource for creating management plans and future conservation studies in Richmond. She handed out information sheets and Conway magazines to source ideas and examples of their work. Kristin will email contact information for the project coordinator to Judy, and attach a copy of the information sheet to share with Geoff Urbanik.

As there were no other matters arising, the meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.