

Richmond Conservation Commission Minutes, May 9, 2017

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

Meeting Start: 7:35.

Minute Taker: Bob Low

Public Comment: None

Minutes:

- March approved as revised
- April approved, with specification CRF Lake Iroquois award for surveys and education not maintenance.

Additions to Agenda: Green-Up Day

Green-Up day

- Once again successful. Kudos to all involved.
- Spreadsheet needs to be updated. Not an easy task. Those who contacted people should work on updating spreadsheet for those individuals they contacted and send to Judy.
- State would like numbers of people involved. Would require re-contact. In any case Highway Dept. does record weight.
- Consideration should be given to constituting a committee composed of RCC members plus others such as Linda Parent, to coordinate sign-up (now at Town Center and Town Garage) contact volunteers, establish centralized call in method, master-mind the spreadsheet, etc.
- Need to find out what happened to the electronic sign-up map used year before last. Judy will try to get email for designer, Nick Floersh: Bob will then contact.
- Consider contacting VYCC about oversight and other help.

Updates

Lake Iroquois

- Outcome of Richmond Selectboard (SB) meeting:
 - Many who attended, including Lake Iroquois Association LIA reps, were not from Richmond, rather Williston and Hinesburg.
 - Those who testified generally informed.
 - Most comments were against any herbicide use.
 - Concern about effectiveness of herbicide on hybrids expressed but looks not to be an issue with chosen herbicide: SONAR.
 - Was pointed out to SB that Richmond CRF fund was for survey and education only;

- SB took no action.
- Judy will circulate a revised formal application from LIAS, required for SB approval. Issue is completeness in terms of CRF guidelines.
- Remains on the table as to whether Richmond funding should come from SB rather than RCC. General opinion was that SB should take over any continuing funding past this year. Declined to provide any funds this year, with a background of having provided \$1,000 in the past. RCC funding at this point is one-time. Five-figure funding from Williston and Hinesburg is thought NOT to come from Conservation Reserve (CR) or CR-like funds.
- Discussed whether and how Richmond taxpayer dollars should be used. Richmond may have property along the Lake, and Richmond taxpayers use it.
- Hinesburg hearing:
 - Opinions for and against were pretty evenly divided.
 - Many expressed strong feelings against any use of herbicide.
 - LIA has not tried mechanical harvesting enough.
 - Concern about down-stream effects (on adjacent wetland).
 - Concern eradication just for boaters.
 - Testing will be done by SONAR – conflict of interest?
 - State has specific criteria that must be met and will consider public opinion in coming to a determination. Timeline not certain.
 - The Hinesburg Conservation Commission did NOT support the LIA plan and request for funding.
- Not clear if understood that remediation by whatever means so far has proven to be an un-ending battle.

Gillett Pond

- Due to be considered by SB, 5/15/17, though may be delayed: RCC members urged to attend.
- Need to stipulate that award will be made at time certain, when annual CRF funding has been awarded, such that CRF fund will not be in promissory debt.
- A (generous) sunset clause, perhaps 3 years with renewable option should be considered. Judy will check with RLT about this and discuss with Geoff Urbanik.
- RCC should think about responding to a possible Selectboard move toward a Town vote. Not required as per CRF policy, but SB could decide anyway. RLT might be advised of this possibility as well.
- Discussion of whether \$150,000 was the right amount in terms of size of award and possible future requests. Generally agreed had been considered in context of RLT original request for \$200,000.
- General issue was raised about additional request(s) for same projects. CRF guidelines are moot – consider modifying them at next re-write.
- Issue raised about multiple awards to same individual / organization. RLT has received funding before (Bombardier, Willis Hill). General consensus that this should be approached with eyes open to the issue; for the moment should be considered on a case-by-case basis, vs modifying CRF guidelines.

- Richmond residents in the past have expressed wish that any CRF funding in excess of some amount (presently unspecified) should be by Town vote, not just for purchases of property as is now the policy (e.g. Town Forest). Should be considered at next re-write of CRF guidelines.

UCF

- \$10,000 has been received to develop a management plan, thanks to efforts principally of Ethan Tapper and Bob Heiser. \$5,000 could be used to help develop a management plan.

Open Space Institute Funding

- VLT has received \$86,000 from OSI. Funding is contingent on successful grant applications to VHCA and the Feds. Conway School also should be considered for support. Though OSI funding was unanticipated, discussion led to conclusion that CRF funding in any case still will be required to cover total cost.

Friends Of Winooski River

- FOWR seeks drivers for shuttling participants in the upcoming Winooski Race and Ramble, specifically by RCC members. Members free to respond as desired. An issue is accident insurance.

Natural Resource / Working Lands Section of new Town Plan.

- Judy and Bob summarized outcomes from 4/19/17 meeting with Planning Commission (PC). Meeting went well overall with constructive dialogue. PC concerns included length of RCC Draft; whether numbers specifying buffers and like dimensions should be in Plan or in Zoning regulations; the strength of action verbs (e.g. restrict, protect) thought these are right out of State language and regulations. Bob will be working with Brad Elliott to fashion a response to send to PC before its next May meeting, 5/17/17. Bob will share revisions and response to PC issues with RCC as soon as available.
- Concern voiced with regard to restricted length in terms of language that specifies action steps that will stand up to outside challenge, as per State Supreme Court ruling on Jam Golf.
- Was agreed that outside opinion should be sought with regard to constructing language that will stand up (e.g. VNRC, VLCT).

Andrews Forest Management Committee

- RCC ideas with regard to membership were reviewed. Ultimately a Selectboard decision, but pot needs to be kept boiling with regard to refining this to enable significant RCC involvement in decisions. Was suggested a hunter should be on

such a committee. Cecila Danks another add to list. Judy will circulate the latest list for consideration at next RCC meeting.

- Bob Heiser to be asked what he considers to be the most important next step, in terms of Committee membership (who should be involved; when) and getting started on a Management Plan. Would be good to have management language to consider available as soon as the Committee begins to function.
- Town Forest Committee structure and management plans for Warren and Hinesburg available on the internet. Would be a good starting point for discussing management and use issues such as trail bike use.
- With current membership, would be difficult for RCC to take full responsibility. Important to consider a committee that has the variety of expertise to manage a (town) forest, not all of which is represented on current RCC.
- Ongoing management fiscal costs may not yet have been fully appreciated.
- Parking needs attention.

RCC workload

- Workload is substantial and would be increased if RCC involved significantly with Town Forest management. Issue is whether membership should be expanded (to 9). Double-edged sword aspect is needing a quorum for meeting and majority approval on motions.
- Judy will circulate resume for Guy Roberts and will contact Samantha Wolff about membership.
- Selectboard will be advised that RCC wishes in strongest terms that Kristin be reappointed to a full term.

RCC Reappointment Schedule

- One position currently open (Kristin's: see above)
- Two reappointments up for next year: Judy, Bob
- RCC feels strongly that RCC Chair must have significant say in appointments – concept of franchise appointment.

RCC budget

- Other Town functionalities have an operating budget (e.g. police, Town admin.). RCC feels same should be true for it. Discussion should continue with Geoff Urbanik.
- Issue discussed as to the ad hoc capacity to go to Town for RCC Chair-approved support for RCC professional development as has occurred in the past. In addition / alternatively, a line item for that and other expenses such as brochures, announcements, education / outreach and the like.
- Consideration should be given to including language regarding mini-grants at next re-write of CRF guidelines; along with.

Adjournment: 9:25PM.