

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, October 10, 2017

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

Attendees:

RCC Members Present: Judy Rosovsky, Bob Low, Guy Roberts, Kristin Nelson, Mary Houle, Ibit Wright, and **guests:** Hannah Phillips and Alison Anand

There were no public comments.

The September minutes were approved.

Announcement from **Bob:** Monday, Oct. 16 there's a Huntington Select Board hearing on funding for the Gillette Pond Replacement Requisition for their Conservation Reserve Fund.

Let's try to spread the word about this event:

Holly Kreiner is organizing a Stormwater Soiree at the Richmond Free library on Tuesday, October 17th, from 5 - 7 pm. Here's the description:

"Over the next several months, a Stormwater Master Plan will be developed for Richmond. The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (<http://winooskinrcd.org/>) seeks YOUR help with identifying local stormwater and water quality concerns in town. Please attend this meeting to provide your intimate knowledge of Richmond and to speak with WNRCD staff about a possible site visit to assess stormwater concerns on your property."

Judy will post it on Friday.

Guy will go to the meeting as the RCC representative. **Ibit** will try to be there too.

Guy mentioned that Cochran's family members cleared some ridgeline that they purchased from the Washburn's. **Mary Houle** agreed to convey Guy's concerns to them.

Bob talked about his annual report on E-coli contamination in the Huntington River—the sentinel of fecal contamination. Corinne Parnapy has taken over from Aaron Worthley. The major contributions are from runoff; there is little evidence for spot sources, one possibility being Hollow Brook in Huntington. The next step is NOT to do a major survey, says Bob, but to do genotype testing, and to target suspect areas. A Pilot genotyping was undertaken 2 years ago; only 1 human, the rest were animal sources. Had taken samples at 15 points but funding was cut so only 10 now. Hollow Brook is a potential problem. Bob will send the latest draft of the annual report and we ought to post this report and others like it on our RCC web site. Results of the *E. coli* testing can be found on the Huntington River Conservation Partnership website at <http://www.huntingtonriver.org/> (look at tabs for *E. coli* Results).

Maria Dunlavey, a UVM in the graduate Field Naturalist program wrote a great report on Gillett Pond as part of a Rapid Ecological Assessment study. Bob had asked what we would lose if we lost the dam. Her main concern was loss of diversity should the dam be removed. Bob thought we ought to post this document, too, to our web site. Bob also thinks we ought to send this report to Bob Heiser as an example of the level of detail of assessment we think would be important for developing our management plan for the Andrews Farm property.

Hannah Phillips talked about the UVM Field Naturalist (FN) Program. She is a graduate of the program and a former University of Vermont Field Naturalist (FN). She offered information on the kinds of reports FN's write as part of their education. We could contract with and FN for work we need done in Richmond.

- A class project for first year students learning the process of ecological assessment
- 1 ½ year master's project - Proposals for these projects are due before the holidays for the following year. The cost would be \$5K for the work done by the student and the 3-4 faculty advisors. The field work would be completed the summer following the proposal. The report would be finished by the following spring.
- Rapid Ecological Assessment – just for fall projects for an individual FN student in their 2nd year, in the fall or summer. The work would free of charge to us.

Judy will contact UVM FN faculty Jeffrey Hughes and Walter Poleman about the possibilities of our contracting work by the FN's for RCC purposes in Richmond.

Ibit and Guy offered a preliminary report on Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) meeting in September 23rd. The main points:

- Jens Hilke could work with us, the RCC, on long-term strategic planning. He does this consulting on a regular basis around the state with other CC's. He is very good at this!!
- **Ibit** went to a conference session about involving youth on town boards, including conservation committees, and is excited to talk with Richmond Town Manager Geoffrey Urbanik and other board members and chairs about getting high school students onto Richmond boards. There are very good models with Shelburne and Montpelier boards. **Alison** said that high school students have served on boards before in Richmond.
- **Guy** went to a session on planning trails with wildlife in mind. We need to be aware of how our trails evolve on town lands and town trails. Trails are the opening for fragmentation and invasive species.

Guy also went to a session on BioFinder. Biofinder software can help maintain wildlife corridors by taking into consideration new development and forest fragmentation. Vermont is now less than 80% forested.

Bob indicated that there were certain gaps in the State-wide assessment that need to be filled based on more local (Arrowwood) assessment such as east-west wildlife travel corridors.

- **Ibit** encourages the RCC join the AVCC and pay the yearly dues from our town funding. It would be wise to support this state-wide organization of conservation commissions who are there to support us.

Judy reported that we received money for the RCC budget.

Mary thought we ought to piggyback our Green-Up Day efforts with Arbor Day.

Ibit thought that, for homework, we ought to consider ways to spend our money.

Alison Anand reported from the Richmond Planning Commission (RPC)—on which she serves.

Town Planner Claire Rock has left us. The RPC has been working with a consultant to develop the new Town Plan. Bob's report submitted on behalf of the RCC, to the RPC for the new plan, is excellent. The deadline for the new plan is now past due. Our town plan has expired. The RPC members are each taking parts of the plan to revise it. Alison took the Natural Resources section and the History section because she felt special commitment to these sections. Alison said there is an issue with regard to specifying specific buffer widths for rivers and streams in the Town Plan. Bob indicated that RCC previously had recommended their inclusion but PC concerns about this had led to the possibility of dropping numbers in the Town Plan, placing them rather in revised a Zoning Ordinance.

. Alison wants to be sure to show concern for rivers and streams in the new town plan.

Bob requests the current draft of the town plan draft be sent to the RCC and posted on the town web site.

Kristin updated us on **Willis Hill**:

September was to have been the next meeting since July. Lou Borie is stepping down from the Willis Hill Stewardship Committee. No one has stepped forward to replace him. He had sent a grant request for building a parking lot off Rte. 2. The Richmond Land Trust (RLT) did receive that \$15K grant, and the lot will be able to be built soon. RLT is in touch with Sandra Fary, a teacher at Camel's Hump Middle School, who, with her students, actively use Willis Hill for educational projects.

Kristin reported on **The Conway School**. The faculty and students there take on planning projects and ecological assessments. Kristin handed out an information sheet, Overview of The Conway School's Curriculum Framework. We could submit a request to them for work that would be part of the Andrews Farm management planning process. Kristin submitted a proposal from CJ Lammer of the Conway School for a three-month project potentially for this spring.

Continued discussion of issues related to Andrews Farm/Town Forest

The Town of Richmond received an Urban and Community Forestry Program grant which gives us \$10K worth of in-kind services from the SE Group. The focus would likely be recreation.

Guy suggested Sandra Fary might be someone to invite to be involved with this grant.

Judy will talk with Jeffrey Hughes and Walt Poleman about options for getting an FN student to do an assessment in Richmond on the Andrews Farm property.

Guy spoke about the two thrusts of recreation and conservation we've been talking about. But, what about education?

We wondered how we might utilize Hannah Phillips' help. She is a conservation analyst who now works for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

We adjourned about 9:30.

Respectfully submitted Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright