

Richmond Conservation Commission
Minutes, August 9, 2016
Submitted: Bob Low

Present: Jake Davignon, Mary Houle, Bob Low, Kristin Nelson, Judy Rosovsky
Absent: Rick Barrett, Elizabeth Wright

Meeting began: 7:34

Public Comment: None

Appoint Minute Taker: Bob Low

Welcome to new member: Kristin Nelson. All around the table introduced themselves.

Updates:

Tree Project (Jake): Jake reported on discussions with Clare Rock and status. Grant has been executed, trees are in (one replacement). There are no restrictions on species. There was discussion of canopy type and the finding that certain trees (e.g. maple trees around Town Center) are having difficulty due to location on underground ledge: type and location need to be considered in future. Town has agreed to water. Plans are to go in for a grant renewal for more trees. Funding for gardener work was part of this go around, with responsibility shifting to RCC for future. Mary indicated she would look into doing a tree-planting workshop. Jake and Mary will follow up.

Erosion issues – River, Cochran Road access (Judy). Judy has discussed the issues with Ann Smith (Friends of the Winooski) and Noah Pollock (River Conservancy) as well as with Geoff Urbanik. Discussion of general and Selectboard concern about erosion along river walk adjoining Village Green but also in Jonesville and on Dugway. Plan is to take steps before winter. Concern was expressed about certain steps now under consideration. Reference was made to RCC drafted Natural Resources section for new Town Plan, posted on Town web site for discussion of do's / don'ts. Judy will provide RCC a summary of discussion and continue dialogue with SB. An added, related issue is to take into consideration certain wellhead protection areas.

Deterioration of Cochran Road access was discussed in terms of the issues and responsibilities: RLT ownership, Town Right of Way responsibility. Was thought that a lead issue here was at the junction of Cochran Road and the driveway to the parking area. Bob discussed his recent work with RLT to map Conserved / Protected lands as per State guidelines: will send RCC copies of definitions and maps for future discussion. The possibility was discussed that funding for improvements might be eligible for Conservation Funds. Onus would be on RLT to apply.

Gillett Pond Update (Bob). Engineering plans are complete. Discussions with State suggest approval likely. Total cost now in range of \$500,000-600,000. More if extra façade work and parking are included. Hoped that “In kind” help from local construction firms might mitigate cost.

Original target for construction starting spring 2017 has been pushed back by RLT, reasons including avoiding State Permit expiration deadline (2-3 years) if Permit is issued well before construction begins; need to get fund-raising efforts underway. Application to RCC and Huntington Conservation Commission are expected to be forthcoming.

Up-coming Items (Judy).

River clean-up (Judy). Future plans for annual river clean-up and groups involved discussed (Watersheds United / Green Up). Judy will send out an email regarding upcoming Webinar scheduled for 8/10 (1-2 PM, watershedunited@gmail.com). Issue was raised as to whether local TV could cover.

Hazards Mitigation (Judy). CCRPC request for review of Proposed Plans previously had been circulated to RCC. RCC members were urged to respond as they could. A specific issue has to do with culverts: locations and size. Road at Greystone was mentioned as an example. Again, the posted RCC Natural resources draft for the new Town Plan discusses. Feedback should be submitted to Dan Albrecht, CCRPC Senior Planner: dalbrecht@ccrpcvt.org or (802) 846-4490 x 29. Comments may also be sent via mail to: Chittenden County RPC, Attn: Dan Albrecht, 110 West Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski, VT 05404.

Land Use: conserve vs use (All). Discussion focused on what should be permitted in environmentally sensitive areas and wild-life corridors. Priorities for protection need to be built, much of this discussed in the posted RCC Natural Resources (NR) draft for new Town Plan. Will be important for review bodies to use a scientifically based approach to assessing development proposals, as part of low-impact planning process. Generally felt that there would be areas where mixed use would be appropriate. Case-by-case approached generally felt wise. NR maps were circulated during discussion and the possibility raised that the maps could be posted at the Town Library. The issue was raised as to whether RCC should be part of review process, e.g. proposals before DRB. The land use issue should be an on-going discussion, springing off posted RCC NR draft.

Matters arising:

Judy circulated list of contact info for members.

Andrews property walk-around. Was not possible for RCC members to go to walk with Bob Heiser (VLT). Hopefully will be another opportunity. VLT (or RLT) is considering developing bike trails. Application to Conservation Fund would appear likely to conserve the land.

Judy will pursue with Geoff Urbanik approaching the Selectboard for a "petty cash" / operating budget (e.g. for printing, brochures)

Motion to Adjourn approved: 8:43.

DRAFT