

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 7:30 pm -- minutes

Present: Max Krieger, Bob Low, Caitlin Littlefield, Judy Rosovsky, Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright, Jack Linn

Public: Greg Western, John Arneson, Jean Bressor,

Appointed minute taker: Caitlin L.

Amendments to the agenda:

- 1) review and approve April 2020 minutes at end of meeting.

Johnny Brook Trail Repairs

Greg reviews revised “re-boot” of Johnny Brook Trail. Reviews storied history of Johnny Brook trail and infrastructure. Highlights: during Irene (2011), boardwalk and bridge did not break but were washed downstream and then reclaimed; South Burlington high school students added ramp to bridge (2016); when it had been a road, river could be forced into narrow channel between bridge abutments, but now lighter infrastructure bridge doesn’t span full meander; 2018 horseback riders wanted to build ramp, which is only ½ length of floodplain area – should be longer.).

Now asking for funding to clean culvert and re-build trail infrastructure: rebuild dog-leg boardwalk, expand bridge

Various questions by the committee included: all the work within the ROW? Yes. Does the state need to be involved? TBD – does cleaning out an existing culvert on a town road constitute stream alteration?

Bob makes a motion to approve (seconded by Ibit):

The RCC unanimously recommends approval of the application for CRF funds in the amount of \$8,400, as described in its application 2020-04-14, updated 2020-05-11, to provide a mid-term solution to an immediate problem, to be available for a period of three years from date of approval. Conditional on acquisition of any required town or state permits

Reasons:

- **Responds to the criteria for CRF funding as described**
- **Deals with an immediate need to pressure Agricultural lands**
- **Recognizes significant and ongoing cost share**
- **Recognizes past commitments to maintenance**
- **Significantly improves resilience to further major storms.**
- **Evidence of significant recreational use by walkers and bikers**
- **Maximizes accessibility to disadvantaged**
- **Commitment to monitoring future use**

Unanimously approved: Caitlin Littlefield, Max Krieger, Judy Rosovsky, Jack Linn, Bob Low, Ibit Wright

May pursue Rise Up VT grant for bridge cost-share. Note that approval of this proposal does not preclude exploring additional actions to ensure longer-term resilience.

EAB Preparedness Plan Update

Judy will grab quick reference for ash IDs. Please clearly distinguish from boxelder.

Caitlin recapped successful webinar from last week. Impetus for preparedness plan: 1) map out cost for town, 2) prepare the public for likelihood of substantial tree death/removal; 3) generally educate private landowners for likelihood of this coming down the pike. Justification for using Collector for ArcGIS: data are georeferenced, don't have to manage data, can return to exact same tree to monitor annually. Of course, total numbers by road are a helpful snapshot, too. We need to get realistic cost estimates for treatments.

Next step is gauge how volunteers want to proceed with inventory. See if they'll commit to stretch of road. Important to know where is sampled to avoid apparent absent which is simply non-detection of presence. Need to decide how to prioritize roads.

Green Up Day

Green Up Day apparently bumped to later in May, but challenges include CSWD capacity and openings, road crew capacity/interest to collect bags. Ibit brings up question of whether or not Gov. Scott cancelled today? If yes, encourage folks to do Green Up on their own, but there won't be full-blown, town-supported effort. Even if not, delegate this to town (esp. Pete Gosselin) to decide. We will support their decision and generally promote even informal clean-up.

Member of the public Dave Thomas joined to hear update.

Beaver damage

Jon Kart wants help in fall to paint trees with sandy paint. Especially regen, which is getting hit hard from beavers. Jon thinks beavers lost their food store during Halloween Flood, so this may have been that they had to go re-build their stores.

This is part of broader Volunteer Park effort to restore riparian buffer. Includes planting of over 400 trees and slight trail re-route.

Fern fiddleheads

Several concerned citizens report bag-loads of ferns. Brad sent around sign specific to commercial harvesting. They're essential to maintaining stability of these banks. In the past, police department has been willing to help enforce conservation area rules about not overharvesting. Nobody can find/remember if there's a town ordinance. JR will solicit police cooperation. Others who are interested in posting signs should still do so.

ACF committee

We need to recommend someone for it – we get to do so as an RCC. We need clarification re: town bylaws. We think we get one from RCC onto ACF and then we can nominate an additional one. Judy suggests that we re-nominate Wright, who has done well by the RCC. But it's actually unclear whether or not we even need to end up nominating anyone, as there may be three openings with three nominees.

Needs to go before DRB, because it needs to have conditional recreation use. People are asking why we need to have this additional use specified if it's already written into the easement and management plan. Might this hamper management or other future planned uses? What are the implications for private landowners who want to open their land for recreation?

JR will go to DRB in effort to get exemption for this requirement.

We still want field tour with Ethan.

RCC

One open position. Max is re-applying. Jimmy Cochran – need to check in with him if he’s still interested. Jack and Max are willing to post on FPF.

Stage Rd. parcel

Selecboard needs to approve because it was discussed but not voted on. Need to ensure that Richmond portion remains designated as “old forest” and will not be subject to any management.

Lake Iroquois

Jack reports that LIA has submitted proposal to state to use Procetta-COR aquatic herbicide, which is specific to Eurasian water milfoil. Native species have declined based on regular monitoring and milfoil has been on the rise. See update at LIA website: <https://www.lakeiroquois.org/invasives/milfoil-control-efforts>

Two mating loons from last year have 2 babes and all four are back!

Adjourned at 9:25pm

Respectfully submitted, Caitlin Littlefield