

# **RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Meeting minutes, Tuesday May 11, 2021**

**7:30 PM**

**Commissioners attending:** Max Krieger, Bob Low, Judy Rosovsky, Ibit Wright,

**From the public:** Lou Borie, Fritz Martin, Brad Elliott

**Appoint minute taker:** Judy Rosovsky is taking minutes

**Minutes approval:** March and April minutes were approved

**Additions, amendments to agenda** – Add follow up on agenda items to agenda

## **Gillett Pond CRF Application Renewal:**

The Richmond Land Trust (RLT) had requested and received Conservation Reserve Funds (CRF) in the amount of \$150,000 towards rebuilding the Gillett Pond dam. RLT members have been working behind the scenes in a ‘silent phase’ to raise the additional money required to complete this project. Due to the pandemic, fundraising efforts were curtailed, and the sunset date on the RLT CRF application is nearing. But fundraising has been productive and the last \$250,000 will include a public fundraising effort.

In response to questions from Max, Lou Borie explained that the design was commissioned by Wesson and Sampson, who gave options on the dam types, and a gravity concrete dam was chosen. Design plans have been submitted to the state for Army Corps of Engineering permits and state safety permits. Lou can send those to Max.

The target date to start construction has a fixed window as the work must be completed in 1 season. RLT plans to put that to bid at the end of this year and start in the spring, if all goes well. Construction companies will want \$ in the bank as loans or cash through not necessarily the entire amount. So parking lot, decorative fairing, stewardship monies are not needed up front. Costs were higher during the pandemic and may go down as conditions improve.

It could be complete before 2024. Can get estimate of cost, not promise. A margin has been built in for possible increased construction costs. There may be grants for community projects –“closers”-now that much of the fundraising is complete.

Bob Low recused himself from this discussion and vote. A motion to approve this renewal was passed unanimously.

**Motion:** Motion to recommend that the Richmond Selectboard approve the renewal of the Conservation Reserve Fund application for the Gillett Dam project, in the original amount of \$150,000, with a new sunset date of May 2024.

This project meets Conservation Reserve Fund criteria A1, A2, A4, A7, B1, B4, B7 and B8.

## **Volunteer’s Green Tree Planting Project** – Phase 2 application:

The tree planting for future erosion control on Volunteer’s Green organized by Jon Kart and others with labor provided by local students went well and was quite fun. The RCC expressed appreciation and commended Jon and his helpers for their efforts.

Jon was given about 50-100 additional trees and is requesting additional funds of \$668 to cover the costs of stakes and protective tubes for those trees. The total number of trees planted will be close to 500.

The following **motion** was passed unanimously: The Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Richmond Selectboard approve the request for use of Conservation Reserve Funds towards Volunteer's Green Habitat Restoration as requested in its application dated May 10, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$700 with a sunset date of May 2024. In doing so the RCC recognizes that the request responds to a number of Conservation Fund Criteria including A2, A4, B1 and B3.

**Conservation Commission applicants:** The town received 3 applications for the open Conservation Commission positions, from Daniel Schmidt, Steve Fugate and Kathryn Kreider. Thanks to Ravi and Ibit for their recruitment efforts. The RCC endorsed all of these applicants and will respectfully request that based on information in their letters, if there are different term lengths, that Dan get the longest term. Please note that town staff keep track of appointment years and term lengths, and we thank them for that.

The RCC is grateful for Dan, Steve and Kate's interest and we are excited about getting new members!

**Richmond Bike/Ped/Trails and conservation convocation:** Good feedback on getting together. Trail connections, trails and ecology and balance. The NH Trails Planning Guidebook for People and Wildlife <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/trails/documents/trails-for-people-wildlife.pdf> is now available as a webinar at <https://extension.unh.edu/blog/trails-people-and-wildlife-webinar>. Could make as homework for group. Possible late fall date, maybe outside. Previous venues Cochran's and VYCC. Contact folks at Rec, Trails, RCC, RLT, Richmond Mtn Trails, Andrew's Community Forest, Cochran's, senior groups and possibly educators like Sandy Fary and Jeannette Malone. Ask for topics of interest. Open and honest discussion, no behind scenes grumbling. Topics might include 'what to do with class 4 roads'; 'increased rec demand', 'COVID'.

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and transportation routes for bikes. Max gave update last meeting. There is a bike master plan to connect all of Richmond's community resources. A letter was sent. VTrans has a lot of influence. Planned roadwork is opportunity but VTrans has not been communicative about bike lanes or sidewalks. Can RCC write letter of support to/for Selectboard (SB)? Jon Kart will share the letter to the SB.

JR question – who does oversight of Andrews Community Forest? Vermont Land Trust oversees easement. SB oversees town committees.

Trail day on Sip o Sunshine trail across from Old Jericho Rd at 4:30 on Wed May 12.

**Fern update:** Ibit saw 3 people including an older woman and a couple in their 30's-40's picking about 20 pounds of fiddleheads. They claimed innocence of rule. All signs are down from the bulletin board at the Beeken parking area.

This is depressing and Ibit would like us to work on an ordinance with teeth. The police told her to ask Linda Parent about how to go about developing an ordinance. Brad sat in on the regional fern meeting organized by Duncan Murdoch. City Market is no longer selling fiddleheads. Jon Kart reports that

fiddleheads are gone from overharvesting in certain areas along the Winooski, and that F&W has no state law that they can enforce.

Brad suggested a school project on fern restoration near Beeken rock for PR and education. He mentioned the Nature Conservancy study that Sharon Plumb conducted. We can ask VT League of Cities and Towns if any town has a fern ordinance. Jon says the only protected plant is ginseng. It is believed that leeks are not overharvested.

**EAB card feedback?** Card looks nice and it got press attention. Could update it regularly.

**RCC website:** Ibit and Josh organized the RCC website and updated member names. A new website will be coming soon and committees will be able to post our own documents.

**Other:** Bob Low would love to see a long-term climate change project take place at the Andrews Community Forest. Who could initiate and conduct this? Maybe UVM Field Naturalists (FN's) or Master naturalists? Follow change over time. Walter Poleman is taking over from Jeff Hughes (FN program).

**Motion** to adjourn approved.

**Minutes (formal or informal) are due at the town offices 5 days after any public meeting. Please send me a draft within 5 days from this meeting (by 5/17/2021).**