

Richmond Recreation Committee Meeting, January 4, 2022

Members present: Harland Stockwell, Mark Fausel, Chrissy Keating, Stefan Hartsfield, Sheri Lynn, Kate Anderson, Kate Kreider

Called to order at 7:00 pm.

Public Comment

Jessie Heiser- I'm here with a question about Community Wellbeing Initiative and if this work falls under the work of the Rec Committee? Does this connect with the community outreach and education goal?

Sheri- We definitely will discuss this further when we talk about our workplan. Stefani has been closely involved and worked on the report so she could share more about this.

Stefani- Right now my only major update is that this could factor into the budget for different towns and not sure where this will connect, but we are working on it.

Jessie- Just wanted to learn where your work falls within that scope.

Sheri- We are still working on that and trying to determine this. Maybe there will be more clarity tonight or at a future meeting.

Kate A- Shared personal update; will be stepping away after March for committee "maternity leave" but hope to come back at some point in the future.

Sheri- I wanted to share out the appointments for each committee member and when our terms end. For Mark, Kate A, and myself, our terms end in 2022 so there would be a renewal process we should be aware of.

Ravi- Linda will send an email to everyone in March and request a renewal letter about why and if you want to continue on.

Sheri- Kate K has a three-year term until 2024, Harland is 2023, and Stefani is also 2023.

Ravi- Statute advises that you stagger terms when you start a committee you stagger the terms so you don't have everyone reapplying at once; so eventually we will all be on a 2-year regular term.

Chrissy- I wanted to share that Mr. G, the PE teacher for Richmond Elementary School, is working on a grant to build bike trails around the school campus. He has reached his goal for a matched grant to do so and this will be an upcoming rec opportunity. I believe they want to have a pump track and other features on campus of Richmond Elem/Camels Hump Middle School.

Kate K- I believe he may not learn about the grant status until the spring but they have definitely applied and have received donations in a fundraiser for the match.

Approval of minutes from December 7 meeting

Kate Kreider made motion to approve; Kate Anderson seconds motion. No discussion. 6 in favor; 1 abstain (Harland; did not receive them to read them in advance). None opposed. Motion passes.

Kate A- Shared out about our blurb for Richmond town report for 2021. Will share with the full committee and ask that individuals reply specifically with any comments or additions (not reply all to support open meeting laws.) Written with support and edits from Kirsten Santor who was the committee chair through October 2021 and reviewed by Sheri as new co-chair.

Chrissy- Can check in to see if it's needed in the Bolton town report to determine if we want to share our report there.

Sheri- Huntington we will skip this year because they do have their own committee, and their report tends to be quite crowded.

Stefani- For a future agenda, could we discuss the name of this committee? Should the name reflect all three towns? Perhaps we should discuss with the Huntington Committee to see if they add anything about participating in a 3-town committee.

Sheri- My hope is to attend one of their meetings and build a relationship first before jumping in to asking them to include info about us.

Fourth of July Updates-

Ravi- Talked to Linda in December. They do want to keep their own committee, not run by the town. There are some aspects they will keep, but at this time there aren't enough members to run the committee. They want it to be assisted by the committee. She was asking for volunteers from the Rec committee to help coordinate day-of volunteer efforts. The request was not for overall organizing of the event, as the Fourth of July committee will still exist. Separately, they are seeking new members to join their committee (separate from Rec and town.)

Sheri- Added that they specifically needed support around the children's activities. Someone from the Rec committee will join their upcoming planning meeting. They plan to meet soon (after holidays) and we will determine the specific date and time. Kate A or Sheri or another Rec committee member will join in and learn more about what they're thinking.

Ravi- Games during the day, chairs, tents, programming that comes to mind is all welcomed from the Rec committee.

Mark- Does the email from Linda have the date and time of the meeting and could it be shared? I may be interested in joining them as a volunteer, independently of the Rec committee.

Sheri- There is no official date yet but we can share this with others. We do have to be aware of open meeting laws and not conducting business by including all members. We can certainly let Linda know so that you can join in.

Mark- Can you clarify about open meeting laws and emailing? As long as we are not discussing amongst ourselves, is there an issue with that?

Ravi- I can send you the email with the details, but it includes essentially the information I just shared now summarizing my conversation with Linda.

Stefani- I feel that one of our strengths as a Rec committee could be helping them do some outreach and coordination for many volunteers on that day. I am part of that committee, and it is small. Harland has been volunteering there for many years as well. Someone was discussing all the support that Mr. G has behind him and the work he does. Maybe someone could talk with Mr. G and see if we could start getting volunteers together now to try and sign up for shifts. Middle of the day on the 4th is when they especially need support as they run kids' activities and many people go home and finish up their shift.

Kate K- We could definitely share this when we attend the meeting.

Chrissy- I wonder if they have a process such as Google Spreadsheet to help people sign up for slots. I am not sure what it looks like from their side but that could make it easier on volunteers.

Stefani- Yes, we (at 4th of July committee) have used SignUp Genius in years before, especially when we had an intern helping out with the process. I am thinking we should have 1-2 of us from this committee go to the meeting and offer to take care of volunteers for a specific activity such as kids' programming. That way we can take on how to work that specific task and decide how to recruit.

Harland- Yes, in the past they also had sheets out to sign up for different programs going on, such as at town activities.

Sheri- Yes, volunteer commitment is something we could work on since we're a committee of only 7. How many volunteers are usually needed the day of?

Harland- Unsure of specific numbers. The biggest part is usually setting up. In the past, the Fire Department used to get tents, though people bring their own. Clean-up is also a big task and we've tried to get Boy Scouts to join in past to pick up any trash.

Stefani- Yes, and high school students can get volunteer hours as well. It just involves many people so that everyone can still enjoy their 4th of July holiday.

Sheri- We do also have our bin with lawn games and can promote that too.

Snowshoe Promotion-

Sheri- We have our library loan for Bolton, Huntington, or Richmond library cardholders. Week at a time loans. Kate K made a wonderful poster for us. Brewster-Pierce put it in their newsletter to parents.

Kate K-I sent it to the Richmond Elem and Camels Hump Middle and they shared it on social media and in newsletters.

Chrissy- Shared so it's on Smiley's Facebook page and Bolton town page.

Stefani- MMU has a listserv that goes out to all the high school students so the students can access it and learn about it.

Sheri- Times Ink will run a story about it in January, and I will put it on Front Porch Forum around the 3-day weekend for MLK Day, and before Feb break from school. We should hope for snow so people can use the snowshoes.

Planning Commission-

Sheri- Lisa Miller came as a liaison last month to help connect us with Planning Commission. I wanted to check in with Richmond residents to see if there's anything we're interested in to convey to Lisa who is here tonight too.

Stefani- I have a request which other members may agree or disagree with. As we are a fledgling committee learning how we plan and take action, could we have mentorship from Planning Commission members about how to do this and set our priorities? Especially since we all work from the town plan, this could be valuable support as there may be intersection and overlap with the work we do and our broad definition of Recreation. We also have a lot of turnover with members over time so it would be helpful to have that mentorship.

Mark- It's true that the Rec Committee is a fledgling committee and we are still starting out, but we do have a lot of ideas and projects we've moved forward with such as VOREC grant, snowshoes, discussion about the school's work. It can be hard with an hour and a half per month to get work done, but I think we are making good progress.

Lisa- I agree with Mark and I feel the same way sometimes about the Planning Commission as a new member. It takes a lot to get the lay of the land and get going, but the fact that you care and show up is the important part. Tasks will come to you as people learn about your work. We at the Planning Commission are primarily responsible for the Town Report and implementing this. We're working somewhat slowly on our priorities and plans. I definitely recommend a copy of the town plan and reviewing the big goals. Everything the Recreation Committee does is a dot on the board and can connect up to be part of a broader plan. I have always used the SMART goals (specific, measurable, actionable, reasonable, timely) and I can tell you are following those particular metrics. Ravi may be able to support with funding as you need it as well, if money is an obstacle to work you plan to do. The state and town have money to continue with projects you envision.

Sheri- Valuable to go through our updates since when we get to the point of looking at our action plan, it can help us prioritize and order what we're doing this year or future years. I was very impressed by our annual report from 2021 and the momentum we are building. I do think things are moving along.

Sheri- I'd like to move forward with the bicycle/pedestrian master plan update from Ravi.

Ravi- The town has been working on this master plan for 1 ½ years. This first phase included connections North of the river, new paths, and if there are devices to install. We're now looking at South of the river and we have monthly steering committee members such as Local Motion, community members, and other stakeholders. We've had some drop-offs in attendance so far. I wanted to see if one of the Rec committee members would like to begin joining us at them. We have been seeing actual alternatives and updates in the project. On February 9th, there will be a public meeting. On February 1, the Steering Committee will meet to discuss and plan the public engagement process. There will be a WikiMap as we did last year– you can draw lines and put in points of where you'd like to see connections in town. It's a transportation-related theme (landmarks, connections from A to B, go to parks, run, bike, etc.) We will also have some analog maps at the Town Center in the window and in the library so people can physically draw (kids, adults) lines where they want to go and what barriers exist for keeping them from getting there. Based on that input the project team will put together a map with possible connection. My hope is that one of you here would join those stakeholder meetings. More information about the project is in the agenda for tonight.

Sheri- I definitely see that one of our roles as a committee is to connect with the work of others with similar goals. We need to have some way of providing information to other committees and receiving information from them. I don't know if anyone is ready to commit at this time to being part of this steering group, but it could be a really valuable role.

Stefani- Wanted to note that this was how the Rec committee came about. The town vision from 2017 was to see connected routes between the three towns, not just Richmond, and being able to move between them by bike and walking. There are also the wellbeing issues connected to this as well.

Ravi- The steering group meetings are the third Tues of every month, right before Trails committee.

Sheri- One more update before we move to planning and work time. Stefani had shared some information about Williston working on a community center with a pool. I would like to invite Williston's Rec Director and/or committee chair to come to one of our meetings. They are using some American Rescue Act planning funds for a new study (last one was in 2008) to hire a paid Rec coordinator to support their full-time Rec director (already existing). They will also do a study to look at building a community center that may or may not include a pool. Stefani brought it to our attention to see if we can advocate for Richmond, Huntington, and Bolton residents a

chance to someday use that community center/pool when it is built and how we could somehow be part of it. This is something that other towns with more money are doing.

Harland- I know this came out of the closure of The Edge in Williston and the town talked about buying it but ended up not doing so. Every time we've done a survey in Richmond, everyone requests a pool.

Sheri- We will stay up to date on this project and learn more about it as it unfolds.

Planning time:

Sheri- Shared out the different areas of focus for the Committee (Outreach and Education; Volunteers Green; Funding/Grants) and details about each. I'd like to propose that we look at what is listed as a goal or project for each area, and decide if we'd like to prioritize it for 2022. We will then decide if it should be whole group or in subcommittees. I'd like to examine them with the lens of SMART goals that are achievable. This is a conversation for us to have as a committee and maybe narrow to 2 goals per each of the 3 Areas.

Outreach and Education

Sheri- Kirsten Santor has been working with the new website system to upload the brochure information on it. Sheri will support with this process. I think we could take this off of our list since it's currently being worked on outside of committee meeting time. We can go around the room and discuss this.

Kate K- I think that the Inquiry/feedback form would be valuable for the future input of town residents.

Chrissy- my vote goes to the strategic 3-town plan

Mark- I'd like to add on to the value of the 3-town plan as well as to focus on the website and what its capabilities are to create feedback opportunities, connections with businesses and Senior Center. Curious to learn more. I'd like to learn more about this opportunity and maybe block off time as a group to be briefed on the new website and provide guidance and feedback.

Chrissy- I agree, also a great way to connect the towns.

Stefani- I was really surprised to learn that the brochure was finished as I didn't learn about this until now. We were granted a fellowship through the Wellbeing Initiative with some new Resource compilation software. I think it's really important that we use some of these opportunities.

Harland- Doesn't have thoughts at this time.

Kate A- Expressed support for Community Senior Center as important community resource for folks of all ages and maybe having them featured on the new website. We could reach out to Martha Nye to learn if there are other opportunities to collaborate with them and support specific work.

Sheri- We definitely have narrowed this down further and with a focus on the website and learning more about our role here. We could definitely continue to connect with Martha in that way. The feedback/inquiry form is something to work on together. Maybe we can continue to plan to have Williston come and share more about their town's planning. If we work on making

the plan then that could potentially be a subcommittee if needed. Anything new we need to work on or add?

Final three goals chosen from this Area: 1) Feedback form, 2) Website, 3) Support from other towns and learning about their work

Grants/Funding-

Sheri- We only had two things listed, the first of which is the VOREC grant and what impact that will have on this committee to support implementation. What would we be expected to do? We will know at the end of January if Richmond gets this grant. What work will be expected of this committee specifically? I know it will also be involving Volunteers Green playground and mats, etc.

Ravi- I believe that if we receive the grant, procurement will be important work for this committee, from actual equipment selection to landscaping to mats themselves. Installation likely would not be done by committee members. Site plan would be valuable.

Harland- Noted that previous playground was built by volunteers.

Ravi- Definitely possible then. Perhaps Rec Committee could be a steering committee with creating site plan, getting public input, etc. This could involve significant work whether it's a different steering committee specific to VOREC, or just part of Rec committee work, depending on the workflow decided.

Sheri- Also, regardless of status of that specific grant, we have noted the plan to continue to seek out more funding for future projects. The big question is- if Richmond does get the grant, would we also focus on getting more funding.

Kate A- Even if we don't get our funding from VOREC grant, how could we still achieve some of our goals regarding updating the playground and using the donated mats?

Jessie Heiser- I feel concerned because I attended a meeting (was alerted by Rebecca at Radiate Art and I am a board member at Radiate Art) discussing the playground updates and the grant. I wasn't aware about decisions being made to replace the playground and mats. It seems to me that the greenest approach would be not to replace it at all. I don't see a lot of community members being asked about it or broad swaths of voices being heard.

Sheri- I was not part of grant-writing so I am not sure of details there. I know there was a need to address Volunteers Green because the structures are in many places broken down.

Harland- The mats were donated from Ben and Jerry's and they are made to go under all the playground equipment. The equipment is failing. Every year the state comes and inspects it.

Jessie- So has the playground been failing safety inspections?

Harland- Each year we put a lot of money and time trying to keep the playground equipment current and safe enough just so it can pass yearly inspection from the state. Flooding is also a challenge that wears down the structures. It is not safe.

Ravi- There will absolutely be a minimum of 2 public meetings, likely more, to determine what the town needs and wants here since the town is not just this committee or the employees of the town.

Kate K- The plan was that due to the tight turnaround with the VOREC grant application, we would work toward submitting it and if we do receive that grant, then we would begin to conduct public meetings to determine what community members want specifically from the actual structures.

Stefani- To address Jessie's concern further, I believe there is flexibility in the way we've written the grant that we could change the elements and style of the actual playground equipment itself.

Jessie- I am curious about that process and if a particular kind of playground would be subbed in for what's there, that would go against getting outreach and community support and what the users of it want, and the goals and needs of many segments of the community.

Sheri- We're trying to use resources we already have for free and think of how to use those mats. That resource which is sitting in the town garage and intended for the playground was important to use.

Ravi- The grant is overall broad strokes. Our plan is to shore up the riverbank, landscaping, replace playground, new benches. There are no specifications on the kind of these things chosen. That will all be chosen by the town and through public comments. The only thing we already have described in the grant application are these donated mats and there is still some flexibility there.

Jessie- It seems that this is putting the cart before the horse because the mats you have aren't going to connect with the type of playground (like all natural materials) that may end up being preferred by the public.

Sheri- I appreciate input. I don't think we can have clarity on this tonight because we are past our time and we don't yet know if we have this money from the grant. In February I think we will know more and can plan more. I know Jessie had emailed us about playground structures and research. We meet the first Tues of every month so please do return and continue to offer input.

Lisa Miller: I wanted to know for the 4th of July effort if you want to strongly tie together the three towns, Bolton and Huntington have climbing walls so that is a resource Richmond doesn't have. There is a portable rock wall as well and they can staff the wall for kids to use. It does need to be planned really far ahead. I can connect you with the people to work on that. It's free as well.

Sheri- Thank you for this, Lisa, we'd definitely like to reach out and learn more.

Kate A- motion to adjourn at 8:42 pm. Kate K seconded. 6 in favor, none opposed.