

Town of Richmond
Parking Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday February 8, 2021 5:30 PM

Members (all present):

Cara LaBounty
Diane Mariano
JC (John) Cohn
Lou Borie
John Rankin

Others Present:

Gary Bressor – Richmond Land Trust (RLT)
Willie Lee – Trails Committee

5:34 PM Welcome and Public Comment (recording started)

Diane read email for public comment by Jack Linn in reference to the Volunteer's Green parking and The Stone's Throw parking. He wanted to make the committee aware that with better organization and good space marking the limited lot could handle more cars

Cara was appreciative of Jack reaching out and perhaps we could invite him, and those parties involved, to a future meeting when the Volunteer's Green is on the agenda.

5:34 PM 1. Review & Approve Minutes – 1/13/2021 & 1/25/2021 – moved to next meeting

5:36 PM 2. Open Discussion with Richmond Land Trust (RLT) with Gary Bressor

Gary gave an overview of the Bombardier Meadow and the Beeken Rivershore Canoe Access. He was here to give information and personal comments, he was not giving a Richmond Land Trust (RLT) position. He did say he would bring forward issues and questions to the next RLT meeting if there was time on the agenda.

Beeken Rivershore Preserve – Canoe Access Topic

There was discussion around the present-day canoe access parking lot, and potential parking east/west of the parking. Lou shared a map to help clarify the areas.

For the actual present-day parking, there could be some lot improvements, and possibly some signage to show people how to park their cars (similar to the sign at the Bombardier Meadow parking in summer 2020).

In looking at eastern side of the parking, perhaps some additional cars could be added there with some work.

And west of the parking (right before Kemp field) has some potential parking, although it would be difficult to portage a boat and this would need a road cut. Gary felt that perhaps the East was more preferred since it would be an extension of the existing lot.

It was noted that adding any additional parking may need to go through the same Vermont Housing Commission.

Bombardier Meadow Topic

This land was purchased and protected for agriculture with the ability to add a few parking places. While it is not the mission of RLT to create parking, they did see the need during 2020 and stepped in to help out by creating a temporary parking area within the field. The Vermont Housing Commission gave a one-time permission for the summer 2020, due to the pandemic, for this parking area. This was a relief for the congestion of cars that park along Cochran road, trying to access the river.

The question was brought up...since the pandemic will still be here this year, could the same temporary parking arrangement be made for the Bombardier Meadow for 2021?

Also, wondering if there is need for more year-round parking at both the meadow and the canoe access?

These questions would need to be discussed among the RLT board.

6:09 PM 2. Open Discussion with Trails Committee with Willie Lee

Willie explained both the variety of trail systems in Richmond and the popularity of Richmond as a recreation destination mostly for bicyclists. This appears to be a home-grown network pulling together resources from many directions and with that, parking issues.

For the past several years, there has been an informal push to get bikers off of the Round Church street parking and encourage them to park at Cochran's Ski Area parking lot. And it has become common to hear..."I'm going to Cochran's" for biking. And Tuesday night's in the summer can see the Cochran lot filled with cars!

The Trails Committee has received a grant from RiseVT to help with new signage for the trails.

There are 3 trail entities in Richmond: Richmond Trails, Cochran's and Vermont Mountain Biker Trails.

Willie mentioned that it would be nice to have the Water Tower Parking area for more cars since soon the "Sip of Sunshine" trail will connect with the Richmond Town Forest.

Willie also explained the generosity of Lars & Susan Wittman making parking on their land for access to mountain bikers and hikers for the Johnny Brook Trail and access to the Champlain Trail system. This area also has had more than expected cars and the Whittman's have had to reduce the parking size.

The trails committee will be having their next meeting on 2/16 and we could email him if we have additional questions.

6:38 PM

3. Action Plan-Update

a. 6:38 PM Incentive Conversation and Railroad ROW – JC

Incentives

JC had some discussions with Josh Arneson about what, if any, compensations could be offered to a landowner if they would allow parking. Josh made inquiries and suggested it would be better to keep tax roles separate and perhaps come up with a lease agreement, or another proposal, that could be brought to the Selectboard. Perhaps there could be a change of usage of the land.

It was agreed that this was a larger conversation for the committee for another time.

Railroad Right of Way (ROW)

JC had to do a bit of untangling of communications to sort out who actually owned the ROW of the railroad through Richmond. New England Central Rail (NECR) owns the track structure and Canadian National Railroad owns the land around the track, after the sale of Central Vermont. CNR contact is James (Jim) Fountain for ROW. They do have a lease/purchase program that is in place for the railroad ROW. They do not do seasonal nor short term leasing. They prefer 5 years leasing or purchase. They are completely open to it and said make a proposal. This is a grey area right now for people using it...a bit of don't ask don't tell. Whatever happens, this proposal needs to go through NECR and GWRR due to the safety considerations. It was noted that due to the high rise no way a car could approach the track.

b. 6:51 PM VTRANS – Rt 2 (Bullpen) & Johnny Brook State Land – Lou

Rt 2 (Bullpen)

Lou has been in contact with Jeff Blanchard, who works in the ROW section for VTRANS. He knew the area (Bullpen) and it is clearly in the State ROW and was going to make some inquiries to see what that would entail. At a minimum it would require a state permit (11/11 permit) to get the access permit. Beyond that it would require their permission.

Also, VTRANS has a Park & Ride Program and they have grants for Park & Rides and Lou will reach out. Concerns about commuter parking verses recreational parking.

Johnny Brook State Land

John R. added that he did check out the river access to the Johnny Brook State Land site and it is quite a scramble up. It is doable, however takes a bit of effort. Not easy.

Lou will find out more once reconnects with Jeff Blanchard.

c. Cochran Ski Area connection – John R.

John R. sent 2 emails and has not heard from them. Willie Lee said it is quite a busy time for them right now. We will put it aside since they are so welcoming to mountain bikers.

d. Other areas for fact-finding

e. Next Agenda Items

Cara and Diane will make the next agenda items and create some inquiries directly to RLT and see where we can help them.

6:58 PM **Adjourn** Lou moved to adjourn the meeting. JC seconded it. All said aye.