

**Town of Richmond
Parking Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday June 28, 2021 6:00 PM
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Location: Richmond Town Center, 3rd Floor

Members:

Diane Mariano - present
JC (John) Cohn -present
Lou Borie - present
John Rankin – present

Guests:

Gary Bressor
Fran Thomas
Mary Ann Barnes

6:05 PM Start
6:00 PM Welcome and Public Comment

Jane Miller shared comments with the group. A big thanks to PAC, Pete Gosselin, and the town on all the parking that has been done. Her personal experience has been increased awareness of traffic, bikes, and people. It has been hard to negotiate driving and walking due to this increase in activity. While she was happy to see all the bikers off racing this past weekend, she wished she was notified so she would have changed her activity. She is happy to hear Umiak is shuttling folks however is not sure if that activity will also increase more foot and people traffic. Jane would like to see “no parking” between the 2 bridges (Huntington River Bridge and Winooski River Bridge) along the ROW for safety and noise.

6:05 PM 1. Parking Updates & Next Steps

a. Round Church - Historical Society – Fran Thomas

Designated Round Church parking spaces are still being used by bikers, in both locations, right near the Round Church and in the lower grassy area.

- Requested a postcard from PAC to highlight Recreational Parking map so they could help advertise the other parking areas.

Follow-up: JC and Lou will work on creating a simple informational Recreational Parking card with QR code.

- Asked for help to divert parking from grassy event parking area, by Gary Bressor at a previous meeting and Fran Thomas through email and phone call.

Fran and I talked (6/19) about the Historical Society changing the signage on the grassy parking area to read something like “Round Church Event Parking Only” and maybe put a rope across the entrance. Fran is talking with the Historical Society about more informative signage.

- Fran and I talked (6/22) about “Back Roads”, a touring bike company in California. For the past several years (minus 2020) they have used the Round Church upper grassy common area to begin their bike tour through Vermont and ending in Montreal. They give the Historical Society a \$40 donation and tour the Round Church.

In the spirit of moving recreational parking out of the upper Round Church parking area they will have them park below the Round Church event parking grass area. There are 2 conflict dates with that space, and they will look to other areas like the Town Center parking or the Volunteers Green.

We talked about the difficulty in finding all the internet trail apps and websites that may designate parking at the Round Church. **JC will reach out to TrailForks and AllTrails to show Richmond Recreational Parking lots.**

Gary Bressor gave us information of RiseVT Grant program for signage. This is what the Trails Committee is using.

b. Overocker Park

Yard signs advertising the Overocker Park site should arrive early July.

Umiak

Personal connection was made with Michael Porcelli, Program Director with Umiak Outfitters by phone on Tuesday 6/22/2021 to create connection with Umiak to help them and to better understand their river access & exit.

At the time of this call, Umiak was going to have a “soft start” to tubing for the 6/26 weekend, weather permitting and Umiak found a river exit they were going to use return to Overocker Park. **Diane/JC will contact Umiak about their river exit findings.**

River Access, Trails & Signage – Updates from JC and John Rankin

JC, John Rankin, Jon Kart, Willie Lee, and Stefani investigated river exit to match to best trail system to Overocker Park.

River access trails

- As a group we explored the existing marked trail and followed it to the Rivershore trail and from there to several prospective river access points
- We identified several points where the trail got near the river, but at points of 3–5-foot steep mud drop-offs, which made them both difficult to use and environmentally undesirable due to encouraging erosion of the steep bank.
- Jon Rankin helped us find a much better access point in the form of a rocky beach with a much less steep access. The beach is 0.2 miles from the Overocker parking area and is suitable for recreation as well as boat and tube put in and take out
- that map is accessible
here https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=11qgUydUfAB4cObyoKa3w_HtHaOu1YakD&usp=sharing and will be maintained by John C

- We discussed what it would take to create a more direct trail... We measured the distance and being about 632 feet which is 0.1 miles. We agreed that the rough terrain would be hard to do trail making on while the bracken was up. To minimize the environmental impact of adding a new trail we discussed the possibility of rerouting the existing River Shore Trail to make a more direct access. It looks like that needs to be done because some of the trail is very near a crumbling part of the riverbank. We will revisit this in the fall after the bracken has died back.
- **Follow-up: John C to work with Willie to meet in the Fall, after bracken has died, to survey possible new trail routing to reduce distance to parking lot**

Signage

- We discussed what type of signs might be helpful to users of Overocker. We agreed to some Signage indicating direction and distances to the beach. We also discussed Creating a simple sign in and survey system to gather feedback any information from Overocker park users.
- **Follow-up: John C to work with Willie to create the following signs:**
 - One sign at the trail head show that identifies the beach trail and distance (0.2 mi)
 - One sign at the drop off asking folks not to use the steep access and directing them towards the gravel beach with distance (300').
 - One sign visible from the river indicating river exit.
- PAC discussion about signage for river exit. This has never been done along the river since all river exit-points are more obvious. However, the Overocker Park river exit is hard to find. No one knew who gives the “ok” to make this happen. We thought Trail might be able to put a simple sign or flag for this season. **Diane/JC will follow-up with Willie.**
- **Follow-up: Willie to create a simple note pad box that allows Overocker users to sign in, give us feedback and let us know how they were using the park.**
- **Follow-up: John C will create a QR code for a more advanced survey that we can use here and other sites to get deeper feedback from motivated users.**

Maps

- We briefly discussed whether the PAC parking map (<http://richmondvt.gov/parking>) Should attempt to include all riding and recreation parks. Advice was not to try to do that but instead add links where people could learn more from the primary groups the document the trails
- **Follow-up: John C will add the trail links to the parking page and make them available from the PAC parking map**

Ordinances

- Stefani explained that there were some ordinances update necessary to make sure that Overocker is designated as a real park. This requires some action on the part of the select board
- **Follow-up: Stefani will speak with Ravi about getting this on the select board agenda**

Cross Committee interlock

- We all discussed the need to get better interlock between the many stakeholders and committees relative to Overocker and other recreation parks. We recognize the following possible participants

- Recreation committee
- Trails committee
- Parking committee
- Parking advisory committee
- Conservation committee
- Planning committee
- Transportation committee
- **Follow-up: This was brought up at the PAC meeting and we all agreed that this was important and unsure how to do this. Diane will share these notes with other committees.**

c. RLT Beeken Canoe Access

Pete Gosselin cut the access point on Thursday 6/24 for the new temporary parking.

Update from Jim Feinson email 6/28/2021

- 1) *New access apron is in! Thank you, Pete Gosselin, and the Town. I have test driven it - works great.*
- 2) *We hope to get the temporary parking area brush hogged and delineated with stakes and rope (a la Bombardier) before the weekend.*
- 3) *We'll need some of your directional signage, so folks know it is a recreational parking lot.*
- 4) *We'll leave the current Beeken lot open as well.*

We are moving forward on the longer-term plan to replace the old lot with this new one. There are more steps in that process - archaeology, ecological assessment, lot engineering, permitting, easement holder approval, funding application, RFQ and then doing the work - as well as work on a possible new canoe access.

Let me know if you have questions.

PAC discussed other signage, possibly a sign at the old entrance that said something like “Additional Parking Lot 500’ and an arrow”. **Follow-up: Diane and Lou will work on this, and Lou has the Recreational Parking signs for the lot.**

d. RLT Bombardier Meadow

Umiak will be using the temporary meadow parking as their drop off point. They will be mindful of how to do this when the lot is full.

Diane, representing the Jonesville neighbors, brought up concerns to the Selectboard meeting on Monday 6/21, about concerns of increased traffic, noise and dust, and increased awareness of a temporary parking arrangement due to Umiak’s advertising. There are concerns about the RLT Bombardier Meadow as a temporary parking arrangement for this year and all the increased awareness of parking here. What will happen next year?

PAC will discuss this at a later meeting.

e. Jonesville Railroad ROW

JC reported that he received an email from Josh that the attorneys are done with the document, and it will be sent soon.

f. VTrans – The Bullpen & the Checkered House (green) Bridge

Lou and I met with Pete Gosselin, Craig Keller (VTrans Chief of Permitting Services), Jon Kaplan (VTrans Bicycle & Ped program Manager- Operations & Safety), David Blackmore (VTrans District Administrator) met at the Jonesville Bullpen on Wednesday June 23rd.

We helped VTrans folks understand the parking issues when the river needs are in high demand. The pictures in the 11-11 Permit helped them see how people were parking during those times. They are concerned about pedestrian safety with the speed of the road and the line of sight. They liked the plan to direct pedestrian traffic along the ledge area. They raised concerns about the Amtrak service beginning and pedestrians crossing the RR tracks.

They all felt that the State land near the Checkered House Bridge (green bridge) next to Johnny Brook Road was a good site and did not need a visit. They said that there will probably be a letter of understanding between the town of Richmond and the federal agency responsible for the interstate. We will hear back from them later in July.

7:36 PM 2. Google Docs

JC has created google docs and we all decided we should put this under an independent name. **JC will make this switch.**

7:37 PM 3. Planning Commission request for review of Town Plan's Goals & Objectives

We all discussed the request from Ravi (email 6/24/21) to have a review of the Town Plan's action items as per our committee. We all felt that this is probably a light review for PAC. **John Rankin and Diane will read through and respond by 6/29.**

4. Next Meeting & Review & Approve Minutes – 6/14/2021

Due to summer vacations, our next 2 scheduled PAC meetings will be 8/9 and 8/23. Minutes for 6/14 meeting were approved.

7:45 PM Adjourned