

Andrews Community Forest Committee

Monday, July 28th, 2025 - 6:00 to 8:35 PM

Location: Richmond Town Center Meeting Conf Rm A, 3rd Floor, 203 Bridge Street

Present: Jim Cochran, Bradford Elliott, Sonya Mastersen, Julian Portilla, Sam Pratt, Ian Stokes, Dan Wolfson (all in-person)

Minutes: Sam Pratt

Note: The Zoom link on the town website was not usable and couldn't be joined. The laptop in the conference room was able to start a new meeting, but it resulted in a different meeting ID and link than the one posted on the town website. Considering the content of the meeting, the fact that it was being recorded, and the understanding that meeting minutes would be prompt and thorough, the committee decided to proceed, despite there being no online option.

6:00 - Committee business

- July 14th minutes approved unanimously
- Due to Wright being absent, the committee elected Brad as the co-chair to run the meeting

6:15 - Election of future chairperson(s) (20 minutes)

- Ian expressed that he would like to transition away from the co-chair role
 - Been co-chairing for 2 years
 - Term is coming up next year
 - Hearing problems are making it difficult for him to run meeting
 - Would like to make a smooth transition away from the position soon
- Ian also mentioned that being a chair is a great opportunity to get to know the rest of the committee as encouragement for others to volunteer.
- Jim mentioned Wright would make a great candidate
 - Wright had mentioned privately to Jim that he would be open to considering running the meetings
 - Other members agreed Wright would make an excellent chair or co-chair
- Wright was not present, so a consensus could not be decided.
 - Seeking Wright's interest/input before making any decisions
 - If Wright prefers a ch-chair role (instead of chair), would he plan the agenda or direct the meetings?
- Would the other co-chair be a rotating position? Ian has been responsible for organizing the meetings and agenda and doing communication with other members of the committee as well as the public. The committee wondered if it makes sense to have the person in that role rotating? Might be a challenge.
- Ultimately, the committee decided to re-assess next meeting

6:33 - Conflict of Interest and Open Meeting Law

The committee reviewed the [Richmond Code of Ethics](#) document together and discussed how it pertains to ACFC specifically, going over a few scenarios that would be considered a conflict of interest that might require disclosure and recusal:

- Abutting landowners
- Trail development and user access
- Finding contractors

Open meeting law was also discussed. The committee was reminded of a few items:

- Working Groups
 - May consist of no more than 3 committee members.
 - These groups are not empowered to vote or make decisions on behalf of the committee as a whole. All materials are to be brought back to the full committee for discussion and approval.
- Email communication
 - Take care when emailing a quorum. This should be for coordinating only, and not for discussion.
 - It was also noted that replying to single members as a part of a group message is also not recommended.

6:55 Request for Proposals for MP copy editor: Request to Selectboard for funding

- Brad, Sonya, Ian were charged to get together and clean up the original RFP that was presented in a prior meeting
- Brad and Ian then met with Josh and how to proceed
 - Josh recommended that ACFC meets with the selectboard on 8/4
 - Ian will get a draft of the RFP to Duncan in time to get it on the agenda
 - This allows the SB to weigh in with guidance on the matter
 - When the full management plan draft is ready, then SB may give authorization
- How to put out bids?
 - Front Porch Forum
 - Times Ink!
 - Reaching out to individuals that may know professionals capable of the work (Cecelia Danks and Daniel Schmidt came to mind)
- Funding
 - CRF?
 - Funds assigned to ACF (currently about \$29,000)
- RFP Details:
 - The town puts out the RFP, not ACFC
 - Sealed bid process: bids are not revealed until the meeting so there can be no discussion prior to the meeting
 - The committee should ensure the RFP is very specific about what we are asking for, so we get the product we want and don't waste time or money.

- Ian drafted an email to send to the Selectboard: *“Request expenditure for a copywriter to work on a draft management plan”*
 - Cost should not exceed \$10,000
 - Should we mention the \$10,000 figure in the RFP?
 - We should not mention it in the RFP itself, but it’s appropriate to mention to the selectboard
 - Half of the funds could come from the ACFC fund, the other half from CRF
 - CRF application would be necessary
 - Seeking the SB’s advice on this process and whether or not this seems acceptable or if they have other suggestions before proceeding
 - The committee asked Ian to add a timeframe for the management plan to the email— late Aug/early Sep

Some other important points that were brought up in the context of the RFP and soliciting the selectboard’s advice on it:

- Timing of events was brought up. How does the RFP and copy editor line up with presenting the management plan to the selectboard, trails committee, and conservation commission?
- Public Comment— the management plan is vastly different than it was the last time the public looked at it. Is another public feedback meeting warranted?
 - Editor should not be interacting with public directly, ACFC’s job is to interface with the public
 - When does the “feedback loop” end? Surely we don’t keep iterating through groups (ACFC, other committees, selectboard, public comment, etc) until everyone agrees (that isn’t likely to ever happen)
- Timeline— which if these happen before or after the copy editor?

One proposed timeline that could be presented to the selectboard:

- ACFC draft finished by end of Aug/beginning of Sep
- Draft goes out to selectboard, RCC, RTC as a check-in and to get initial eyes on the document (since the copy editor shouldn’t be mostly editing for spelling, grammar, organization, flow, etc, and majorly changing the content of the document)
- Around the same time, RFP goes out to find a copy editor
- The editor works on the document and returns it (8 weeks?)
- The edited document is sent back to ACFC, any additional edits are made by the committee
- Polished version goes back out to selectboard, RCC, and RTC for comment
- Comments are integrated and other committees give their approval (or lack thereof?)
- Public comment period?
- Comments are integrated
- Editor takes a final pass on the document
- Management plan goes to selectboard for final approval, and then to VLT as well

7:30 Revisions of Management Plan

The committee worked on page one of the recreation section and made a few edits. Half of the third objective was removed, and the remainder was integrated into the introduction.

There was discussion about motorized trail use in the forest and whether or not e-bikes qualify. It does not seem to be well defined, so the committee added clarity by determining approved uses should be listed per trail (on a trail map/guide doc)

More work is needed on the recreation section and will be covered in the next meeting (8/14). In the meantime, committee members were encouraged to comment on the document and submit them to Sam (ideally by the 11th, giving time to pull the comments together for a document to be published in the packet, which needs to be posted two days in advance of the meeting (usually the Thursday before the Monday meeting)).

Time did not allow for digging into the recreation appendix, though it was noted that it may need significant work. The committee discussed the appendix as a whole and what to do with it.

- It helps explain why specific decisions are made in the recreation section (vs just making arbitrary decisions)
- It was suggested that perhaps the recreation and ecology appendices could be combined
 - The committee has struggled to separate ecology and recreation into separate sections. However, this could serve as “the bridge” that connects the two
 - Could call the section “foundations” or something along those lines
- Brad will do a first pass on merging the two appendices, then bring to working group (Sam/Jim)
- Full committee can review merged appendix on the 18th or 25th

8:30 Topics for upcoming August 25th meeting

- As mentioned above, the committee added another meeting to the calendar on 8/18
- Ian cannot attend, and since the future chair(s) was/were not determined, Sam will be the interim chair for the 18th

8:35 Closure