

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes for Thursday October 13, 2016

Town Center Meeting Room, 203 Bridge St., 7:30 p.m.

Public comments:

No members of the public were in attendance

Committee administration:

Judy Rosovsky was appointed minute taker.

September minutes had been reviewed and were approved.

Richmond Public Officials Ethics forms were given to newer members Mary Houle and Kristin Nelson.

Mary very kindly brought in walnut seeds for us to plant.

It was noted that the SB does not have a liason for the RCC.

JR agreed to send KN the RCC mission statement.

Updates:

Stormwater - The stormwater project at RES initiated by Ann Smith of Friends of the Winooski is proceeding; Geoff Urbanik thought the project was a good idea and was willing to write a letter of support. RCC Chair Judy Rosovsky wrote a letter of support, too. Ann is applying for grant support for the project.

Erosion – Jake had been asked to find a state person who might have expertise on erosion; we learned that the town has contacted state personnel; Judy will try and find a town person (Geoff, SB?) to keep us informed.

Gillett Pond – Bob Low reported that as part of the permitting process an archaeological review has to take place at the site. Nothing of archaeological significance was found at the soil pits, but the historic review turned up some interesting information. Ask Bob for his Free Press article. Two information sessions were planned; one in Huntington (10/20/16) and one in Richmond (10/26/16). There is no historic objection to replacement of the dam.

Huntington River *E. coli* – Bob Low reported that there is some money available for locating sources of contamination, including DNA analysis. There may be a meeting in November, at which Bob will represent the RCC, to determine if there is money, and if so what to use it for. It is possible that Hollow Brook can be investigated, and it is possible that investigation will determine the contaminants are from animal runoff.

Andrews Farm (AF) - JR conversation with Bob Heiser: Management options for the Andrews Farm property were casually discussed. Some models exist: The Bolton CC is planning on managing property around Preston Pond. The management plan was written with the assistance of the Chittenden County forester. Some town forests have been managed by committee but that has not always worked well. A non-profit such as VYCC might take on ownership and management, perhaps in conjunction with a town entity such as the RCC or a committee formed for that purpose.

Questions: -Any info on survey results from Bob's FPF survey? JR not sure, will ask.
 -Has Bob H spoken to the Richmond SB or Geoff? He is planning to present them information formally soon, may have had an informal conversation.

Comments – MH - If VYCC is owner, they should consider current uses of AF such as hunting, snow machining.

 BL- If AF becomes town forest, SB should manage it, not RCC. The RCC can't take on the responsibility without the SB's authority.

 MH – The tree warden could help, and the current use plan might apply. Events should be scheduled on a regular basis, monthly. Avoid benign neglect Maybe the highway dept. or recreation committee or someone could be appointed.

Continued discussion: Owner town forest (TF) or non-profit? If town, townspeople have greater say in management. Town forest products could be good. Value added local wood, Richard Miller does this and is in touch with Bob Heiser. Cecelia Danks is a good resource. There is an existing 23 acre piece of Richmond Town Forest on Stage Rd. Maybe Prof. Danks class could take on TF management as a project for 5 years, give Richmond management plan as product.

Regional Planning Energy Policy discussion:

The maps sent to the Richmond Planning Commission by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) showing potential sites for wind and solar energy installations were passed around. Please note that nothing will be done on anyone's property without their permission. The RCC agreed that we should try to get this on the SB agenda, and ask the town to send a note to the RPC pointing out that some of the potential wind sites (Bryant Hill, Gillett Pond and the VYCC/Andrews farm area) are in priority natural resource areas.

The RCC agreed that JR should ask PC chair Sean Foley to put the RCC draft memo to the RPC on their agenda, and request that they send it to the RPC. This should be cc'd to the SB. The short timeline (Nov 1 deadline) should be mentioned to both.

RCC and public contact discussion: Should the RCC involve more people; should the RCC have a facebook page; should the RCC utilize JR's JSC info booklets?

The RCC agreed that JR should contact Geoff about town policy on Facebook pages, and JR will ask Rick and Jake their opinions. Facebook (FB) would be a good place to put town photos and RCC documents, including the info booklets. Front Porch Forum (FPF) might be as good as FB for communicating, but lacks images. FPF would allow us to introduce topics for discussion such as 'do you want solar or wind on your land'?

Other outlets for public contact include FB, Times Inc., FPF. We could annotate agenda items to generate greater interest and involvement. Judy agreed to ask Rick to post the energy siting maps on our website.

Each commissioner took a booklet and agreed to check it for grammar, original wording and overall utility. JR will send out the electronic versions, which she hasn't done yet, but I will this weekend.

MH - vernal pools and N runoff
BL Melissa's Clean Water and the Blue winged teal
KN Tenacious timber
IW vanishing rabbits and the turkey one
JR deer wintering areas and riparian zones

Matters arising: – The suggestion to ask Geoff for an RCC budget was renewed. [This has been done and Geoff put us in for \$1000 but is not guaranteeing that it will happen].

The meeting was adjourned.

jr/RCC