

**To:** Richmond Selectboard

**From:** Geoffrey Urbanik, Chair, Andrews Community Forest Management Committee (ACF)

**CC:** ACF committee members

**Date:** May 2, 2019

**Re:** Funding requests for minor projects

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**Issue:** The ACF committee requests funding for three items, and provides a preview of planned projects

**Item 1:** Ellen Kraft has purchased two trail cameras as part of an ongoing education program that documents species identity and movement. This data may be used for youth education as well as data for ecological studies. She requests reimbursement from the Andrews Community Forest Fund for these two cameras, with memory cards and locks, valued at \$281.72. Documentation is provided, and the cameras will be property of the Town if approved.

**Item 2:** Trail development is moving forward. The initial lower path considered by the interim management committee and neighboring homeowner plotted a path from the access road to the upper farm road, bypassing the lower farm road that is on private property. This route crosses an intermittent stream that is proposed to be bridged with a small footbridge. The cost of materials is \$248.99. The committee requests permission to utilize the Andrews Community Forest Fund not to exceed \$250 to purchase materials to construct the footbridge.

**Item 3:** We were recently denied a trail grant which was applied for by Guy Roberts. The stated reason for denial was "that traffic on Rte 2 moves too fast. Before we can qualify for this grant we need to work with VTrans to install signage to warn motorists of entry/exit." Therefore, we would like to request that the Selectboard authorize the Highway Department to consult with VTrans about installation of appropriate signage, and make the purchase of the signs using Andrews Community Forest Funds not to exceed \$500.

The FY2018 audit lists the balance of the Andrews Community Forest Fund at \$24,696 as of 6/30/2018. I am not aware of any disbursements from that fund since then. These requests would reduce the balance by \$1,031.72.

**Activity Report:** The ACF committee has been discussing access and how best to open the property. Given the sensitive ecological areas, professional trail design is being considered. The committee believes that a number of trails should be designed at once, so that construction can be phased according to a set plan that takes into account areas that need to be avoided, and designs that manage water flow, while allowing public access to the interior of the property and natural features. This will cost several thousand dollars and a firm path forward has not been developed (no pun intended). However, the value of professional design in this case can not be understated.

Use of the property for educational trips is also desirable, however, the parking lot currently cannot accommodate a school bus. The bus will require room to maneuver so as to not back out onto Route 2. A parking lot modification creating room to turn around will be needed. This will require a Development Review

Board approval. The ACF committee will make a recommendation that includes hiring someone to design the lot, submit the application, and identify a funding source for construction.

Otherwise, the property is open for those able to make it to the current parking lot, or access from neighboring properties. Many people are using the property for walking, and it is common for folks to recognize each other on the existing paths. It has been a successful acquisition so far, and has proven to be a real asset to the Town with much potential.