

Richmond Conservation Commission meeting June 14, 2022

RCC members in attendance:

Judy Rosovsky, Bob Low, Kate Kreider; Daniel Schmidt; Max Krieger

Agenda:

7:30 p.m. Public comments and introductions

Brad Elliot in attendance

No public comment

7:35 Appoint minutes taker; review May minutes

- May minutes need work, so a vote on approval is postponed
- Max Krieger to take minutes

7:45 Additions, amendments to agenda

- Ibit is not hear so replacing Green Up Day discussion with resuming in person meetings

7:50 Announcements: Work Date for Rivershore trail repair – June 21st; Time TBA

- Meeting at 5:30 at overrocker parking area
- Need help moving lumber to where it needs to go
- Not sure how big the lumber is, but the more workers the merrier
- Max to ask about board size and number of people needed

Management plan for Hubbard Park and North Branch Nature Center – July 14th walk

The Town of Richmond is seeking your feedback on draft infrastructure recommendations for phase two of its Bike, Walk, and Trails Plan!

**You can view the draft recommendations and provide comments in a 3-question survey [here](#).**

**Please also join us for a public meeting to share your thoughts on the recommendations.**

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**What:** Richmond Walk, Bike, and Trails Plan Phase Two Public Meeting

**When:** Tuesday, June 28 at 5:30 PM

**How to attend:**

- In-person attendance at the Richmond Town Offices
- Via zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88421693974>

Vermont Master Naturalist Wildlife Tracking event

- There are spots available
- Contact Judy for more info
- It is in Jeffersonville; July 23-24, costs \$275, contact [Sophie.mazowita@gmail.com](mailto:Sophie.mazowita@gmail.com) for info.

Vermont Huts comment period for hut on Moosalamoo

- Open comment period right now
- [https://www.rutlandherald.com/news/hut-project-proposed-at-silver-lake-public-comment-period-is-open/article\\_e879d6b3-4825-5441-8f73-75f4d41060cb.html](https://www.rutlandherald.com/news/hut-project-proposed-at-silver-lake-public-comment-period-is-open/article_e879d6b3-4825-5441-8f73-75f4d41060cb.html)

8:00 How to handle public comments

- The public is entitled to make comments at the beginning of the meeting
- How to handle requests to be put on the agenda?
  - Many folks feel that the chair makes the agenda and allows folks to be here
  - The preference is to have folks let us know early so they can be on the agenda
  - We can be flexible and allow comments as needed
- If/when we have controversial topics are there special things to consider?
  - Maybe we can codify that Judy sends out an agenda, individuals respond with their thoughts, and we can discuss at the meeting if desired
    - If something is or could be considered controversial Judy will make efforts to send it out early
- For public participating in the meeting
  - Most commissioners in favor of the public participating generally in discussions
  - If there is a controversial topic, Commissioners or the Chair could request to limit time for public participation in the actual discussion and/or implement other more stringent rules

8:15 Andrews Community Forest Committee – request for comments from RCC – continued discussion

- RCC received another request from ACFC which maybe we'll discuss at the next meeting:
  - From Jesse Crary: We hope your Committee will publicly recognize the significant efforts being taken by the ACFC to honor the sometimes competing directives of the management plan and ensure all voices have an opportunity to be heard.
  - Judy doesn't feel it is right at the moment to endorse
  - Others agree it may be better to address in individual comments
- Judy feels there could be more public process and would have preferred to hire a professional group like the SE Group to do a full public engagement process
  - Judy wants to communicate with Jesse more about this request before the RCC comments
  - Bob suggests recognizing the general effort of the ACFC and no one else objects
- Brad Elliot --> feels there are questions that are still unanswered
  - Brad advocates for more answering more of his questions

Judy drafted a summary and provided raw comments + Max's notes on people's thoughts

- Should we provide one combined answer? Or individual comments?
- Judy advocates for one comment with our individual comments
- Bob feels that we should remove the sentence that says "no one has reviewed the details of the trail plan" as Bob has (and so has Max)
- Bob is trying to send something in the chat... it is his first time and we are proud!
  - Draft overview of RCC comments = RB-Draft:
    - "The Commissioners on the RCC are not at this time unified in their positions concerning the proposed trails. Some have concerns about the process as it has unfolded; who want more engagement and discussion with the public There also for some concerns about the degree to which the guiding documents, the Conservation Easement and the Management Plan are being followed, required changes in the latter case yet to be forthcoming. Other members are positive about the process and believe that it has been open and has engaged the public.
    - The Conservation Commission has reviewed the public comments solicited by the ACF, most in favor of the proposed trail plan. The Commission also has reviewed the extremely well put together response to the issues raised by the public. There is divided opinion regarding the degree to which issues such as raised above have been addressed, though again with some Commission members in favor of the current trails proposal in which one the original trails has been dropped.

- An issue under debate has been who gains precedence in developing a trails plan: recreationists or conservationists / human use or ecology. Resolution must avoid the notion that one or the other prevails. Rather, the issue to resolve is what is an appropriate balance that honors the requirements of the Conservation Easement and the implementation guidelines provided by the Management Plan. In getting there, what is the best path to follow in responding to the decision-making process as was laid out in the original Town approved documentation.”
- Daniel would like to see softer language that shows that we are collaboratively thinking about this but have diverse viewpoints on the issues (in an effort to avoid more divisive language)
  - Max agrees
- What should be sent in?
  - Individual comments, a summary, nothing?
  - Kate, Daniel, and Max in favor of individual comments
  - **Consensus seems to be to submit individual comments with a cover note explaining why**
  - We will use the formal comments submitted & each commissioner will submit their final comments by 6/21

Brad is asking for a map with the sensitive zones showing an additional 200 ft. buffer extending from them

- Brad asked one ACFC member, but they were unable to produce such a map

Daniel comments that there is going to be further ground-truthing this summer of the proposed trails and sensitive areas which may produce what is requested

- Judy agrees with waiting for additional data

Brad could come to the RCC for money to make the map if he so chooses.

8:45 Ecology and recreation review meeting in Richmond: How the RCC might help facilitate a larger conversation around ecological integrity and recreation access in Richmond. What that type of conversation might look like, who could lead it and what the outcomes might be. Could it start with the RCC playing a more active role in informing the public, such as inviting Carl Russell for a talk?

- There was previous talk of having a conservation and trails summit with the various groups in Town interested in recreation & conservation
- Do we want to do it in smaller pieces?

- Identify a few people who know and understand this type of issue to come and talk?
- There is support for having Carl Russell or someone similar to discuss their experiences
- What is RCC's role in all of this?
  - Providing specific input?
  - Leading discussions?
  - Providing forums?
  - Bringing in speakers?
- Can the RCC members each identify things they'd want to bring up and/or bring to speak to help inform the community and answer some of these questions?
  - What have other people done?
  - Who are the best people to consult with?
- Ideas to not just discuss recreation and conservation, but all of the parts of conservation
- Lots of folks to draw on
- Consensus is to pursue smaller panels/forums/speaker series

9:00 Green Up Day review – possibly Ibit

- Removed from agenda because Ibit is not here

9:05: Do we want to meet in person?

- Consensus is to have a hybrid --> like to meet in person?
- Many folks prefer to meet in person
- Meet digitally for the next few months and then check in?
  - Most folks are OK with that
  - We will check in next month about August/September meetings potentially in person
  - We will maintain a digital component

9:10 Consider fern research

- Bolton has had fern over-harvesting issues and is interested in doing a study
- Does anyone on the RCC have interest in participating?
- Judy is interested and will follow up

9:15 Ethics paperwork

- Commissioners are on top of it

9:20 Matters arising

- Giant hogweed or other phyto phototoxic plants on the Johnnie Brook trail

- Judy to go down tomorrow to take a look and see if we can identify them

9:15 Adjourn

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