

**Richmond Conservation Commission**  
**January 10th, 2023**

**Members in attendance:** Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright, Judy Rosovsky, Max Krieger, Daniel Schmidt, Bob Low, Kit Emery, Kate Kreider

**Community Members in attendance:** Nancy Zimny (Richmond Resident), Melissa Wolaver (Andrews Community Forest (ACF) Committee), Daniel Wolfson (Richmond Resident), Cecilia Danks (ACF Committee), Nick Neverisky (ACF Committee) Jesse Crary (ACF Committee)

**7:39 PM: Appoint a minutes taker:** Kate Kreider volunteered to take minutes.

**7:40PM: December minutes approval:** Members reviewed the current draft with Bob's edits. Also corrected Beeken trail name in minutes. Max motioned to approve, Judy seconded. December minutes passed unanimously.

**7:42PM: Update from RCC Subcommittee and discussion regarding the speaker series:** The subcommittee members are Daniel, Kit, and Ibit. Daniel gave a summary of the work that the subcommittee has done so far. The subcommittee reviewed potential speakers that would have a good perspective on the issues that the RCC (Richmond Conservation Commission) wants to address and they created a list of speakers to contact. The subcommittee asked all RCC members for input regarding the format of the meeting and what specific issues the speakers should be prepared to talk about. Daniel suggested a question and answer format with most of the questions submitted beforehand by the public, but still leaving time for additional live questions from the public as well. Daniel also suggested for each of the speakers to give a short introduction regarding their expertise and knowledge, but not a long presentation, leaving ample time for the speakers to answer questions.

RCC members discussed the format and the theme for the first speaker series meeting. Daniel suggested that we give speakers specific questions or topics that we want to focus on. Kit suggested that fewer speakers, such as three speakers, would be better and allow for more open and thorough dialogue. The theme discussed for the first speaker series meeting is: balancing conservation with recreation. Melissa Wolaver recommended that the RCC contact Shelby Perry, staff ecologist from the Northeast Wilderness Trust as a potential speaker. The speakers that the RCC subcommittee plan to contact are as follows: Meredith Naughton, Eric Hagan, Liz Thompson, Jim Oehler, Bob Zaimo, Tom Butler, Walter Poleman, Bob Heiser, Allaird Diamond, Marcy Harding, and Nathan McKee. A suggested facilitator for the forum is Jim Shello. Judy also suggested Kathryn Wrigley as a possible speaker.

RCC members discussed the importance of having broad expertise and multiple viewpoints in our chosen speakers. Judy suggested having one speaker whose expertise is conservation, one speaker whose expertise is recreation, and one speaker whose expertise is forest management. Cecelia Danks suggested a title for the first speaker series forum: the intersection of conservation and trails/recreation. Kit suggested the title of: how to balance recreation with

conservation without compromising wildlife habitat features. Nick Neverisky expressed that he feels that there's definitely a need for more community, county, and even state level planning regarding managing recreation and conservation on conserved lands.

Jesse Cray mentioned that there is some public confusion about the scope of the speaker series and how it interacts with the ACFC (Andrews Community Forest Committee) work. From the perspective of the ACFC, this speaker series is well timed and there is a need for broader dialogue about recreation and conservation, not based on a specific piece of land. Jesse hopes that this speaker series can open up a broader dialogue in Richmond regarding these issues.

Max suggested to change the title that Kit suggested because compromise is needed when balancing conservation with recreation. Daniel mentioned that there are already trails at the ACFC and many people use them, so the discussion should be about balancing these issues in the future and not just specific to the ACFC. Cecilia Danks expressed that she agrees that it is really a broader discussion and not specifically about the ACFC. Cecilia also suggested the possibility of finding people who could help us monitor and collect data regarding recreation and conservation. Judy reminded everyone that this will be an educational series, so we don't need to cover everything in the first meeting. Judy suggested that the first meeting could focus on town forest management.

Nancy Zimny expressed her thoughts and concerns regarding the impact of trails and recreation on wildlife and habitat. She feels that it is important that people understand the issues and she asked what the timing will be of the RCC speaker series. The RCC plans to hold the first speaker series meeting before the public meeting that the ACFC is planning. The exact date is not yet determined, but the ACFC public meeting is scheduled for March 29th. Nancy expressed that she feels that she hasn't been well educated on the effects of trails on wildlife and habitat, and she thought that the RCC would focus on that. Nancy's personal comments that she submitted in writing can be seen on the town website under the RCC 1/10/23 meeting agenda, related files.

RCC members continued to discuss the speaker series meeting format and theme. There was general RCC consensus about having three speakers who present/educate the public briefly (possibly 10 minutes or so), followed by ample time for public discussion. Daniel suggested the theme/title of: Balancing conservation and recreation using adaptive management in a town forest. The question was raised regarding what adaptive management means. Cecilia responded that adaptive management is when you identify concerns you have and collect data, and then adjust your management approach as necessary in response to the data. Ibit suggested that the title should be more specific to town forest management and the impacts of trails on wildlife. Judy suggested the title of: Balancing recreation and conservation on town forests.

RCC members generally agreed that the first speaker series meeting should focus on education related to the impact of trails and recreation on wildlife and their habitat, and balancing

recreation with conservation, without focusing specifically on the Andrews Community Forest. Cecilia suggested another possible title of: Recreation and wildlife: state of the art science, monitoring, and mitigation. Judy suggested a theme/title of: Balancing conservation and recreation on multi-use areas. Some RCC members felt that this title is too broad and not specific enough. Judy suggested that one of the speakers could be a conservation advocate, one could be a recreation advocate, and the third could be someone who manages natural areas that have recreation. Ibit suggested Meredith Naughton as a possible speaker who is knowledgeable regarding the science related to trail impacts.

Cecilia suggested that it may be worthwhile to bring in an indigenous Abenaki speaker for one of the speaker series meetings as well to get their perspective of these issues. Cecilia also suggested another possible title for the meeting: Trail based recreation and conservation, how can we make them work together. RCC members were in general consensus that this title is a good suggestion. Judy suggested that the RCC can have a special meeting if needed to work out more details regarding the speaker series. The RCC subcommittee will meet again and discuss before contacting possible speakers.

**8:56PM: Annual Town Report:** RCC members briefly discussed the write-up for the town report. RCC members unanimously agreed that the draft looks good and it can be sent to the town manager to be included in the annual town report.

**8:58PM: CRF (Conservation Reserve Fund) Request for Speaker Series:** RCC members reviewed a CRF proposal for funds to be used to pay the speakers who will be participating in the speaker series. Per Judy, the town gave the RCC permission to submit their own CRF request. RCC members discussed how much money we should ask for. Daniel suggested a price of \$200 per speaker would be reasonable. Judy suggested \$1,000. Discussed if this would be enough considering that we hope to have more than one public meeting for the speaker series. Judy volunteered to check with Josh about the best approach to figuring out how much money we should ask for. RCC members discussed that having the speakers in-person would be best, but that having a zoom option if needed would be a good idea.

Judy motioned to approve the CRF request for the speaker series with the following additions: sunset date of one year, and the amount to be determined through a conversation between Judy and Josh (Town Manager). Ibit seconded the motion. RCC members unanimously approved, motion passed.

**9:11PM Further Discussion of ACFC Management Plan Changes:** This agenda item was tabled due to lack of time. Jesse confirmed that there will be a final draft of the management plan changes coming out in the near future to allow for final comments prior to the ACFC public engagement meeting.

**9:13PM: Richmond Racial Equity Meeting on 1/18/23, 7-8PM:** RCC members are encouraged to attend a special presentation and discussion with Judy Dow of the Winooski Abenaki at 7PM on January 18th. She will discuss how we as individuals and as a community

can engage more deeply with the land we live on through the Indigenous practice of land acknowledgement. The zoom link for the meeting was shared with all RCC members.

**9:15PM: Matters Arising:** Nick Neverisky discussed his concern that a community member (Brad Elliott) is misrepresenting the work of the ACFC, the nature of the ACFC management plan, and is causing unneeded tension. Nick stated that Brad has made some allegations which are not true. Nick's personal comments that he submitted in writing can be seen on the town website under the RCC 1/10/23 meeting agenda, related files. Personal comments submitted by Brad Elliott in writing can also be seen on the town website under the RCC 1/10/23 meeting agenda, related files.

**9:20PM: Matters Arising:** Brief discussion about whether or not the RCC wants to record meetings. Max mentioned that it is not required and suggests that in the future the RCC discusses whether or not to record meetings. RCC members in agreement to discuss this more at our next meeting.

**9:24PM: Discussion of Chair for Next Meeting:** Judy stated that she can chair the next meeting. If other members would like to chair a meeting they are welcome to, but not expected to.

**Special thanks to the ACFC members who joined the RCC meeting tonight.**

**9:28PM:** Daniel motioned to adjourn. Max seconded. Unanimously agreed, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Kreider