

Richmond Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday Dec 13, 2022

Commissioners present in person: Judy Rosovsky, Max Krieger, Daniel Schmidt, Kit Emery, Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright

Commissioners present online: Bob Low and Kate Krieder

Members of the Public Present - introductions and comments:

Ian Stokes

Transcript of Ian's comments: Members of the Commission are probably aware that the Andrews Community Forest Committee is planning a public comment process regarding proposed revisions of the Management Plan; further that this will be preceded by an informational program to inform and update the public and Committee about current information and science concerning conservation of habitat, cumulative impacts of human activity, etc.

The Andrews Forest Committee, at its recent meeting, was hoping that the Richmond Conservation Commission and other qualified organizations be willing to organize such an informational program.

I hope the RCC will pick up this crucial task. Also, I hope you will recruit some of the many highly qualified organizations and experts in the area to assist you.

Thanks for this and your other work on behalf of Conservation in Richmond.

Ian Stokes, Johnnie Brook Road

Brad Elliott, [here to hear RCC discussion](#)

Nancy Zimny, here about the ACFC, [the “first” meeting about recreation / conservation in Richmond](#)

Jeanette Malone, here to learn about the ACFC, interested in the educational event we want to plan.

Appointed minutes taker: Ibit Wright

Previous Meeting Minutes: November minutes were approved unanimously, [as amended](#)

Additions, amendments to agenda

We need to write a report of RCC activities for the 2022 Town Report.

Judy will write it and **Ibit** volunteered to edit.

Ian Stokes: ACFC is planning a future meeting for informing the public

Updates:

- 1) Beckwith bench proposal and obstacles: Gary Beckwith asked for a bench on the Beekan-Parsons trail. The money from the CRF... [Zoning issue – permanent structures in Floodplain. Selectboard did approve.](#)
- 2) Gillett Pond CRF money released: Money for the Gillette Pond dam has been released by the town and Brad said the check was received by RLT. They will put it out for bid. Huntington will send their check soon too.
- 3) Ballot language for Conservation Reserve Fund renewal: We need to review language and send to Josh Arneson.

Max proposes we submit the same ballot language as last year. Although we cannot use the language about “renewing” the fund.

Judy will send the language for the ballot.

Judy proposes, and Daniel seconds motion, to use the same language as last year for the CRF renewal.

New Business:

Can we ask for a final report/summary for CRF funded projects?

We all like this idea for present and future projects. **Max** will draft some language requesting a one-page report with photos, as appropriate.

Discussion on our Proposed Speaker Series

Daniel spoke about the ACFC’s interest in an educational program to support their work [/ informen the ~~management~~ Andrews Forest Management planPlan.](#)

We could start our speaker series with a panel that relates to balancing recreating and conservation. ~~within a town forest.~~ [Include Q&A. Could be a series but start with a panel meeting.](#)

Names of people suggested whom we might invite to be panelists:

Alicia Daniel, Vt Master Naturalist program

Meredith Naughton

Sue Morse, naturalist, Keeping Track

Bob suggests we contact the Richmond trails Committee and the ACFC to submit names.

We could target late January for this panel discussion.

Daniel shared that the ACFC public forum is planned for February. He told ACFC about our proposed speaker series. They/We could ask members of the public to submit questions in advance.

Daniel suggests we target a more universal conversation about town forests, and not get too specific about the ACFC, or the ~~easement~~[Easement. Panel of four.](#)

Judy: we ought to help educate people about the issues relating to conservation and recreation balance challenges

Other speaker names suggested:

Liz Thompson, specialist in plant communities

Brett Engstrom independent botanist

[Town Forest Expert \(Ethan Tapper\)](#)

Daniel suggested someone with Ridgeline Outdoor Collective, and Becky Tharp, with Kingdom Trails

Judy suggests Matt Leonard

Daniel suggests having a panel of four people, who, together offer a balance of backgrounds.

A subcommittee focused on the speaker series can meet once or twice to review the list of names and come to a short list of whom we would like to invite.

The subcommittee will be: **Daniel, Kit and Ibit**

Brad suggests Melissa Levy to be the moderator of the panel, if money for her can be afforded.

Bob doesn't think this is a good idea. Daniel and Max both volunteered to moderate.

Brad asked whether RLT can still be part of the future series of speakers. Yes!

Judy will ask Josh about paying the panelists from RCC funds. And she'll tell Jesse (Chair of ACFC) about our plan for this panel and will ask him whether ACFC can contribute to the panel if we cannot get town funding.

[Brad suggests a facilitator, is against question screening.](#)

Discussion of Andrews Community Forest Committee proposed Management Plan changes

See <https://www.richmondvt.gov/calendar/meeting/andrews-community-forest-10-25-22> and click on the ACFC MP comparison with original link for more details.

Brad said he has gone through the document. ~~He'd like~~[He continues to seek](#) a map [as has been promised](#) of the 200ft. ring of buffer around the sensitive areas, as well as the proposed trail routes on the same maps. Then we could all see the problem areas.

Nancy Zimny said that, since we are the RCC, we need to be concerned about the human-caused effects of human recreation in the ACF, and pursue info about the science on the challenges of recreation in conserved areas. Info about the science seems to be missing from the management plan. There are distinct influences and there is no information available.

Daniel shared that there were three aspects to this round of ACFC management plan revision: Update on the trail plan, Indigenous attribution, and general editing for ease of use of document. There was no content editing that happened this round. [Still needs updates.](#)

[Bob seeks to assure consistency with the Easement](#)

Ian Stokes [expands on Nancy's comments. Indicates ~~said there were~~ other missing parts re: monitoring plans for the future.](#) [Asks RCC to look closely at Management Plan Section 10](#)

Max: Thanks to all who are reviewing the plan. There are parts of the plan that address risks to the resources from recreation, and monitoring, esp. 10.1.1.

Brad: He reads that the document says it will try to do things without substantive plans for how the ACFC is going to protect the forest values.

Judy agrees that a longer time frame would be helpful to look closely at the ACFC Mgmt. Plan document. [Will set aside time at next meeting.](#)

Consideration of whether the use of Conservation Reserve Funds is appropriate for the Richmond Bike, Walk and Trails endeavor

MAX: ~~I did not note his comments.~~

Commented [LRB1]: I note he spoke but have no notes on what he said.

Judy has an email from Jon Kart [regarding current efforts.](#) ~~I did not catch anything about this either.~~

Ian Stokes is on the Bike/Ped committee. There is substantial conservation context in [the work of....](#) ~~???~~ [terms of current studies](#)

Bob and Judy agree we would certainly entertain proposals from bike/pedestrian/trails endeavors.

Intro to JR minutes and minute taker tracking sheets - Not discussed.

Matters arising:

Next meeting: We ~~could-should~~ focus on the ACFC management plan. We ought to prepare by reading closely the section on trail development. We'll also have an update by the subcommittee on the panel and speaker series.

[Discussion of minutes takers and schedule tabled for next meeting. Judy will send out.](#)

[Future meetings now will require presence at Town Center: hybrid still OK. Max will look into clarifying regulations re public presence.](#)

Meeting adjourned at 9:10

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth (Ibit) Wright