

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday September 12, 2023 7:30pm

RCC members present:

- Max Krieger
- Judy Rosovsky
- Daniel Schmidt
- Kit Emery
- Bob Galvin
- Jeanette Malone

No members of the public present

7:30 p.m. Public introductions and comments

- No public comment

7:35 Appoint minutes taker and approve Aug minutes; continue to note that our July meeting was cancelled due to flooding:

- Max Krieger appointment minutes taker
- August minutes approved unanimously

7:45 Additions, amendments to agenda:

- None raised

7:50 Continued update on ACFC (Andrews Community Forest Committee) and discussion of moving forward – see special Selectboard meeting with ACFC on 8/14/2023:

- Daniel attended the meeting between the ACFC and selectboard
 1. Meeting was aimed at opening communication between the two bodies
 2. Focus on how to move things forward in a more efficient/effective way
 3. Ask for more frequent updates from ACFC to Selectboard
 - & for updates from Selectboard about what they are hearing from the community
 4. Selectboard offered general admin support
 5. Appointing members:
 - Stick with what's in the bylaws, then amend bylaws to have the same process as all other committees
 6. Selectboard apologized about how they handled the interview for a new member
- RCC has heard people are reticent to join for two reasons:
 1. 1. People don't want to put extra time past the once a month meetings (or not a large time commitment)
 - Idea: hire someone professional to address the management plan and need for change?

- This was talked about at the selectboard meeting
 - RCC funds can't be used to hire full time people, but could be used for a one-off contract to revise the management plan
- It is a significant time commitment and we need people with a certain level of expertise and with a commitment to the process to be effective
- 2. 2. People are nervous about entering a contentious sphere
 - Hopefully have a fresh start... and clearer direction and backing from the selectboard about public process
- ACFC status:
 1. They don't have a Chair at the moment (two acting co-chairs)
 2. The committee needs to be refilled with new members & then decide whether to bring this to the selectboard or to try something else like working with a professional consultant to streamline some provisions & fix up the document
 3. Committee could also bring the trails & indigenous recognition part to the selectboard for review and revise the rest later
 - ACFC likely to ask the selectboard about if/when to publish the draft and if/when to receive any further public engagement
- Recommendation for "newly formed" committee:
 1. Do a listening session without further comment, but just have a session where the public can speak and be heard.
 2. Could invite a consulting firm to help with another public meeting

8:05 Try again to recommend a replacement for Caitlin as one of the RCC requested representatives to the ACFC. Please note that Daniel Schimdt is one of our two representatives:

- RCC will wait to hear from the town about applicants and we can have a virtual meeting to discuss a candidate if needed
- We don't know who has applied (we are unaware of any specific people at the moment)

8:15 NRCS \$65 million conservation grants – see Monday Sept 4 th Selectboard meeting:

- Selectboard approved application to address a specific culvert stormwater issue
 1. This requires a cost-share, but unclear where those funds will come from
- Likely past the deadline for other projects (maybe consider if available for future years)
 1. Only would work for very large dollar projects
- Potentially use RCC funds for a Winooski River assessment (have someone else apply)
 1. Then use that to inform a bid for helping the river & apply for bigger federal grants to pay for it

8:25 Update on herp crossing signs:

- Many towns have local committees/groups that track salamander/frog species crossing during March-May & highlight hot-spots
 1. Hot spots include, but are not limited to:
 - Route 2 by Andrews & also maybe by snipe Ireland

- Cochran Road
 - Wes White Road
 - Potentially other roads (Stage?)
- Other Conservation Commissions have funded signs warning of crossings
 - Signs educate the public, but don't have an impact on actual animal deaths
 1. The only thing that might help is underpasses
 - Should RCC form a team to take counts of herps? (sounds like there is interest from the commission)
 - Try and get the same signs as other towns
 - Tasks:
 1. Talk to Pete Goslin (town highway manager) about getting posts for signs and siting the signs
 - Daniel
 2. Figure out where to get the signs
 - Kit to do this
 3. Get someone to apply to RCC For funds for the signs (RCC can also ask if we can apply ourselves)
 - Also get reflective vests
 - Signs with a light to warn people are in road way
 4. Form a sub-committee to get folks out to track frogs and salamanders (maybe organize a training)

8:35 Rodenticide outreach update and continued planning. See if JR has connected with town re FB page. Need volunteer to run it and post info weekly:

- They don't sell rodenticides in town
- Only businesses or farmers would buy in bulk (there are no real safeguards to see who buys it)
- Post on FPF about the dangers
- Potentially make pamphlets and distribute
- Bob G. to draft an informational post about rodenticide to share
 - Give other ideas on how to deal with rodents

8:40 Old Jericho Road:

- The road was largely washed away during the July 2023 flood
- It needs repair & will take significant funds to fix
- The road is a class 4 road & the lower 3/4s is owned by the town, the upper ¼ is privately owned
- It is not clear which part the long bridge is on
- The Trails Committee & Richmond Mountain Trails is interested in fixing up the trail and applying to the RCC for funds for the town-owned portion
- VYCC could be a good partner to work on the bridge (they have built up to 50 foot spans before)
- Richmond Trails Committee is discussing
- Vermont Outdoor rec Flood Recovery Resource Page has funding opportunities
 - VOREC has flood recovery money possibly

8:50 Matters arising:

Webinars:

- Trainings being put on by VT Fish and Wildlife
 1. There are several units you can take for free
 2. They are geared toward selectboards and conservation commission members
 3. Google search: VT Fish and Wildlife community Wildlife program:
<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/get-involved/partner-in-conservation/community-wildlife-program>

9:00 Adjourn