

## Richmond Conservation Commission Monthly Meeting Draft Minutes

10/10/23

Attendance, Committee Members in Person: Judy Rosovsky, Bob Low, Daniel Schmidt, Jeanette Malone

Attendance, In-person public: Gary Bressor, Sam Pratt

Attendance, via Zoom: Max Krieger. RCC/TC, Hannah Harrington TC, Ian Stokes, ACFC Co-Chair,

Notetaking: Jeanette

### Public Comment

Gary Bressor: Richmond Resident, Calls on the RCC to support his safe biking and walking connector trail proposal along busy Rt 2, complete with wide pathway (constructed several feet away from the road), possible boardwalk through the wetland and tunnels under busy intersections to Park & Ride and extended to the Governor Peck neighborhood near Rt. 117. He requested that RCC member attend the SB meeting on 10/24/23.

Daniel: What is a specific funding request?

Gary: No estimates yet, but the town would need to purchase 3-7 ac including the stretch of wetland east of Rt 2

Judy: Yes, the RCC should support taking the next step to explore this project.

Review and acceptance of the Minutes Daniel moves to approve. Bob Second. All Approve

### Consider Request from Richmond Trails Committee for CRF

Hannah: The CRF supported rehab and building fees in 2021 for the Rivershore Trail, but the July 2023 floods washed away two bridges and lumber slated for another bridge on this trail. The TC proposes using remaining funds of \$1,684 to rebuild the bridges. Additionally, the TC requests funds of \$4,000 to repair sections of the Rivershore Trail. In addition, the TC requests \$5,000 from the CRF to acquire an engineer's assessment of damage and plans to restore the Old Jericho Rd Trail which also suffered damages from the July 2023 storms.

Judy: Suggested a more clear breakdown of budget items than the one originally submitted. She clarified that \$1,684 left over from CRF Rivershore funds + \$4,000 for new Rivershore Trail repair work + \$5,000 for the Engineer assessment and plans on Old Jericho Rd Trail.

Hannah: That is correct.

Bob: When would the Old Jericho Rd work would be done?

Daniel: Need up to a year because of the shortage of help.

Bob: Needs to go out to bid with these estimates in mind.

Max: Need RCC approval asap to bid and get the work done. He suggested structuring the motion in two parts 1) Rivershore Trail work. 2.) Old Jericho Path Engineer assessment and plan.

## Actions

Bob L. makes a motion to approve restoration projects noting they meet CRF criteria (See below). He made a motion for the SB to approve a 3 yr sunset time.

Daniel Seconded, All in favor

The motions are as follows:

### 1. Old Jericho Road Engineering and Materials:

The Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Selectboard approve the request from the Richmond Trails Committee for the use of up to \$5,000 from the Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF). This money will be used for an engineering assessment and scoping of the Old Jericho Road damage. Any remaining money will be used for materials to effect repairs on that trail. This request meets the CRF criteria A4 – enhancing access to natural resources and recreation areas; B1 – Preserving stream quality; B7 – protects no to low cost recreational activities and B9 – protects forest resources by means of a sustainable management plan. These funds must be expended within 3 years of their final approval, or approximately October 16, 2026.

### 2. Beeken/Rivershore Bridge and Trail Work and Use of Remaining 2022 Funding Request Monies

The Richmond Conservation Commission recommends that the Selectboard approve a request from the Richmond Trails Committee for the use of \$4000 from the Conservation Reserve Fund to purchase bridge building materials and to allow the use of the \$1684\* remaining from the 2022 RCT bridge repair project to be used for bridge building and repair too. This meets with the following CRF criteria:

#### II, A. General Criteria:

T Will yield a clear, sustainable benefit to Richmond residents in the form of improving recreation

T Will protect, enhance and provide public access to a natural resource or recreation area

#### II, B. Natural Resources Protection Criteria:

T Preserves stream quality

T Supports low or no cost outdoor recreational activities, such as hiking, skiing, swimming, canoeing

These funds must be expended within 3 years of their final approval, or approximately October 16, 2026.

## **Update on Save Our Salamanders/Frogs Crossing Signs**

Jeanette: The fees for wildlife crossing signs - \$25/sign, \$6/vest, \$8/post,+ shipping and taxes

Bob L: In addition to two signs on Cochran Rd., are there other important crossings such as a sign on the Richmond side of Gillette Pond, a known salamander/frog crossing hot spot that Huntington citizen scientists have been covering?

Jeanette: Yes, it would be good to include one more near the Gillette Pond dam.

Daniel: I have not heard from Pete Gosselin about putting posts in the ground, but we should do it before the ground freezes. Daniel offered help acquiring the posts and getting them into the ground with approval.

(See purpose for the project and other details with application below.)

Actions

Judy makes a motion to approve \$150 to cover signs, posts, and reflective vests.

Bob seconded, All in Favor.

### **ACFC Updates**

Daniel: The ACFC does not have any applicants to fill the three vacant seats. Need to find ways to attract volunteers.

Jeanette: Maybe the ACFC could consider 7 members in the interest of moving forward and avoiding the time consuming work to bring newest members up to speed with the MP revisions.

Daniel: The zoning issue brought up are not ones he has seen in all of his years of professional trail work experience. Engineering work would be very expensive.

Bob L.: Read Melissa Wolaver's excellent summary of her discussion with Zoning Administrator (ZA), (See below in ACFC 9/23 minutes.)

Judy: The definition of development is unclear.

Jeanette: Why was the the ACF re-classified, from "Forestry" to "Recreation"?

Judy: We should ask ACFC member, Cecelia Danks about this because she spoke about it in their September meeting. The Zoning Administrator has the final say.

Bob L.: The ZA clarified to him: Development is defined as any structure and would need to be brought to the DRB.

Jeanette: Would the ACF trails trigger an Act 250 Review? What about the Wetland permits Arrowood reported we need?

Daniel: We first need the SB to approve a trail plan before those reviews.

Bob L: We should discuss the issues with Cathleen Gent.

### **CRF & Tax Increases**

Judy: Spoke with Jeff Forward concerning the CRF increase due to recent property assessments. Should we consider structuring funds as a 50K line-item in the budget instead of the one cent on the tax rate that goes into the fund equals \$10 for every \$100,000 of a property's assessment. 1cent/tax dollar.

Bob L: Appreciated the tension of the increase and we should consider using these funds for emerging climate crisis management challenges such as flood proofing, habitat restoration and other climate resiliency measures that would benefit the town overall. How do other towns do it? Maybe consider voting on the CRF every 5 years vs every year.

Daniel: Perhaps we could give out some sums from the CRF as grants similar to the Vt Department of Forest, Parks and Rec. where he works.

Judy: Let's keep discussing this and see what others advise.

Daniel: What do we do if we don't spend the money?

Judy: Will ask SB this question. Maybe we better inform the town about how to seek CRF. Consider half a cent/dollar vs 1 cent/dollar.

Jeanette: Agree with Bob that the increase is helpful given that climate change is here and funds will be needed to help neighbors such as the ones with sewage still in their backyards from the July 2023 flood.

Call for Participation Annual Association of Conservation Commissions

Judy: Unable to attend. Anyone interested in representing us at the AVCC?

Jeanette: I will attend 10/19/23

Meeting Adjourned - 9:23pm

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Additional info:

Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network Application

Richmond Trails Committee Funding Requests

Notes from the Zoning Administrator

Zoning Definition of Development

2023

Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund Explanation

Conservation-Fund-Information-Sheet-2015

PDF Document · 173 KB

