

RCC Meeting 12/10/24

Members Present: Judy Rosovsky, Jeanette Malone, Bob Low, Kit Emery, Daniel Schmidt, Sam Pratt, Ibit (Elizabeth Wright), Susannah Zefeloff (online).

Members of The Public: Bob Galvin

7:30 p.m. Public Introductions and Comments

- Bob Galvin

7:35 Appoint Minutes Taker and Approve/Amend November Minutes.

- Kit minutes taker.
- November minutes approved after amended (see below).


7:45 Additions, Amendments to Agenda

- Amendment to the November minutes to replace October with November.
- Susannah is approved by the selectboard as a member of the RCC.

7:50 Updates:

- **Update from ACFC** (Sam Pratt), Last meeting was mostly zoning requirements for trail building in the forest presented by Tyler Machia (Zoning administrator). Some of the current proposed trails are in places that would currently need site engineering plans and DRB approval due to their steep slopes over 20%-35% grade. This means they would have to be moved because they are not allowed according to Richmond zoning ordinances. Ian is working on Management bPlan updates including Fopresty and Abenaki recognition.
- There was time for public comment as well and there were voices in that room.
- Bob asked about trails that were grandfathered in and those may or may not be allowed depending on whether they are old logging roads.
- Any other future trails would not be allowed higher than 20% per Richmond zoning ordinance.
- Areas that exist as agricultural trails will be excluded from the zoning ordinances.
- Possibly change the town plan which then would trickle down. In the meanwhile waivers would be difficult to obtain.
- OK to go ahead with trail clearing (brush, downed trees, ...) in 20-35% areas.

Update on Adoption of Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Land Development Best Management Practices.

- Bob contacted Virginia Clark; she sent him a message with clear steps on what their role would be.
- Bob L said Virginia made the point that our town plan will need updates in certain sections. We will need to decide what we want to put into each section. For example, natural resources and then an action item.
- Kit inserted part of the letter from Virginia to better clarify the role of the RCC; The RCC needs to distill this information down into concise recommendations for these particular sections of the plan mentioned in the letter. For instance, in the VNRC docs "Community Strategies etc ..." there is an "Implementation" section which discusses recommended actions to be added to the subdivision regs, the zoning regs and the Town Plan. If your committee could look at these suggestions relative to our documents, you could suggest specific goals or action items that would be appropriate. In the CCRPC document, some of these ideas could be incorporated into the Future Land Use section, some belong in the Energy section or the Nat Res section. I'm not sure that just adopting any of these documents as is into the Plan (if that is what Sam is suggesting) would be useful - but the concepts, definitely. 
- Organizational structure will be helpful to us in figuring it out.
- Bob L. mentioned previously we had sub-groups that worked on e.g., natural resources.
- Bob L. suggested adding Brad Elliot to help guide us.
- We need recommendations as to what applies to Richmond and what we consider adopting.

Update on Old Jericho Rd

- Calle Ewald is looking around at local engineers to get a ballpark estimate.
- What about a feasibility study (we do not want to build and have trails washing away later).
- Agreed that trails should come before building the bridge.
- Action on this we need to meet with Josh to follow up.
- In January we will hear from FEMA as to what they will allow.
- RCC has money in case the RFP doesn't cover all the costs. FEMA only covers replacement cost, though the possibility of an upgrade remains in discussion.

8:05 Conservation Design/BioFinder

- Jeanette gave update on training for BioFinder with Jens (VT State Biologist). Does not need to be warned.
- There is still space remaining for the training in BioFinder for those who wish to sign up.

- Jeanette noted there are 3 levels of training and level 2 is what Jens will spend time on with us.
- Practice on the two videos provided to get familiar.
- We need to provide questions to Jens Hilke and what we hope BioFinder will help us with.
- Send all questions for BioFinder to Jeanette for her to curate and give to Jens.
- **Judy will contact the invited committees.**

8:15 Consideration of Climate Change Project with UVM

- Recently UVM students put together a package with a study which reflects how we deal with climate change in our towns. An example of the study was done in Underhill.
- Most folks agreed this would be a helpful study.
- Bob said Kathleen Gent would like to see this project happen.
- We need to understand what is necessary and how much of our time would be needed from RCC.
- Judy asked should we have them focus on landslide potential within?
- An organizational meeting needs to be scheduled.

9:00 RCC Role in The Town Plan

- Jeanette sent everyone an example of the Town Plan for Bristol. Everyone should review.
- Judy talked about a webinar about bobcats and coyotes and mentioned Jens talking about municipalities that you can have different mechanisms.
- Town Plans are great ways to steer conservation efforts with overlay district.
- On top of your zoning, you can delineate areas that might be more sensitive.
- Good opportunity if we're doing flood replacements and putting in bigger culverts.
- Judy said the different committees lend themselves to various parts, Natural Resources was a big one for RCC.
- Protecting riparian corridors and connectivity is another big one.
- Judy mentioned looking at other towns' plans might be helpful to see how they work with obstacles, like on Camels Hump that have big barriers like rivers, cliffs etc.
- Refer to the Richmond Town Website for more information on different towns.
- Dan asked, just what are we tasked with and what role are we playing?
- Bob L. expressed that Virginia wants someone to help rewrite the Natural Resources (a small group of people who can start the process) Does not have to be RCC affiliated.

- Sam is trying to look at what we have in the Town Plan, initially focusing on land development.
- Sam will research both land and natural resources and try to work on this.
- Deadlines to get info to the Planning Commission? Need General timeline.

9:25 Matters Arising

- Talk with Virginia about the next steps and get a general timeline.
- Dan and Sam offered to lead this small group.
- Read town documents.

930pm Adjourn.