

Richmond Conservation Commission

Tuesday July 8th, 2025, 7:30-9:30 PM

Present:

RCC: Judy Rosovsky, Jeanette Malone, Kit Emery, Sam Pratt, Bob Low (remote)

Public:

Representing 3 Parks Committee: Denise Barnard, Fran Thomas

Representing RLT: Wright Preston, Lou Borie (remote)

Minutes: Sam Pratt

7:30 p.m. - Public introductions and comments

Acknowledged members of RLT and 3 Parks Committee

Sam appointment minutes taker

June minutes approved

7:45 p.m. - Update from Andrews Community Forest Committee

- Not much to report since the last meeting. Good progress is being made and ACFC is on track to finish the second draft of the management plan by late August/early September. Current focus has been the recreation and ecology sections.
- RCC asked to get a copy to look at by or before when the Selectboard looks at it.

8:00 p.m. - Consideration of Richmond Land Trust (RLT) application for Conservation Reserve Funds (CRF) for Floodplain Forest Parcel Acquisition

Application:

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Conservation_Commission/Meetings/2025/07/2025_Floodplain_Parcel_Acquisition_garriscrf_Borie.pdf

- Property access and right of way: not possible, it's landlocked (river, railroad/highway, 2 private properties)
- Property currently owned by Garris & Hampton
- Main function/purpose of acquisition is for ecology:
 - Flood sink
 - Wildlife habitat & connectivity
 - Ostrich Ferns, Silver Maple, Cottonwood
- RCC wondered if there is a possibility to:
 - Do invasive management on the property (knotweed, buckthorn, honeysuckle)

- RCC would like to explore collaboration opportunities to do this
- Can signs be posted to educate and remind people to be respectful of fiddleheads?
- Could a management plan be written for the parcel?
 - RLT not interested in writing one for this single plot specifically
 - Perhaps a coordinated management plan could be written for this and all similar parcels along the river in Winooski as a way to more broadly protect and maintain the Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest natural communities

Motion: “The Conservation Commission voted to approve recommending the Richmond Land Trust (RLT) Floodplain Parcel Acquisition request for Conservation Reserve Funds (CRF) to the Selectboard. The RLT request is for \$7,500 from the CRF to cover a portion of the land acquisition of this unique parcel that contains a lovely stretch of silver maple/ostrich fern forest.”

Sam motioned, Kit seconded. Bob abstained, the rest voted in favor. Motion passed.

8:20 p.m. - Feedback for 3 Parks Committee on arbor vitae for pickle ball court – arbor vitae is native to US and is good sound barrier

Application:

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Conservation_Commission/Meetings/2025/07/The_3_Parks_CommitteeGrant_application_for_CC_Funds.pdf

Park Map:

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Conservation_Commission/Meetings/2025/07/Item_1_D_Figure_3_BC_Rec_Field_Designs.pdf

DRB Decision:

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Conservation_Commission/Meetings/2025/07/DRB_Decision_on_Site_Plan_May_2025.pdf

- Trees need to be planted before the courts can be used, per the DRB
- Three Parks Committee has coordinated with neighbors closely on the project and they are amenable to the ongoing work
- Trees will ideally be purchased and delivered using CRF funds, but will be planted with help from volunteers
- RCC had a few questions about Arborvitae
 - Are they deer resistant? No
 - Are they native? Yes
- Have other plantings been considered? Yes, but Arborvitae is ideal for sound muffling abilities
- RCC wondered if the planting event could also be an opportunity to educate the public about invasive plant species, and if removal could also happen at the same time. There is confirmed presence of Asiatic Bittersweet (at the very least)
- RCC wondered if additional native and rare/uncommon plantings could be added

- Possibly, but not at this time, in part due to the timeline

Motion: “The Conservation Commission voted to approve recommending the 3 Parks Committee Application for CC Funds for continued work on the Brown’s Court pickleball court, including but not limited to the addition of arbor vitae trees for sound barriers, picnic tables and benches and other items that will improve this recreation area. The 3 Parks Committee request is for \$12,703.07 from the Conservation Reserve Fund. The request fits a number of CRF criteria, as enumerated in the proposal related to recreation, natural resources and historic preservation. These funds must be expended within 3 years of the date of final approval. Please note that the Conservation Commission approved recommending to the Selectboard a draft version of this proposal with the understanding that there is time pressure to complete this project and that any changes in the proposal between the RCC meeting and the Selectboard decision will not substantially change the gist of the proposal.”

Kit motioned, Jeanette seconded. Bob abstained, the rest voted in favor. Motion passed.

8:40 p.m. - Town plan workshop – review of material and staffing

- Does Jeanette need any help?
 - No, Jeanette and Kit are going to set up the table at 7:15 on Wed
 - We'll have a notebook
 - No laptop, Bob will drop off printed materials at library
 - Google Poll - QR code
 - Kit 9-10 Thurs, Sam 1-3:30 Thurs
 - Bob whenever Sat, Sam can fill in for an hourish, Jeanette will close out
 - Coordinate with ACFC/get a table next to them? (So Sam can represent both parties at once)
 - Use this as an opportunity for recruitment?
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8:50 p.m. - Update on ‘Richmond Pulls together’ weed removal work

- Jeanette is working on a description to pull people in:
 - “Once a month, 45-minute hands on workshops near the village, focused on small, early detected patches” so volunteers can feel a sense of accomplishment,
- Fellow weed-wise people will ideally reach out and teach others
- Volunteer list / email blast: featured weed, location, time
- What support can RCC give?
 - Be generally supportive
 - Come if you can
 - Feed names for email list
- RCC listserv/email list?
- Pulling Together could be integrated into an RCC mailing list

- How to manage separate lists?
 - Option 1: Keep them entirely separate
 - Option 2: One service with different opt in preferences? RCC, SOS, Richmond Pulls Together, etc
- Social media - what is the best way to manage this? See next topic...

9:00 p.m. - Discussion of RCC website, social media presence – who will manage this, can we use current website, can we get intern to assist?

- Instagram, TikTok, Facebook? Some businesses only use social media for communication
- Who is responsible for managing?
 - Intern? Volunteer, good for their resumé
 - Doubtful that CRF funds can be used to pay an intern but we can check with Josh
- Figure out how to spruce up, post on RCC section of town website
 - This probably needs to be managed by Duncan
- RCC could use a more captivating website and social media presence to inspire people to get involved

9:10 p.m. - Discussion of wildlife monitoring on ACFC – collect baseline data

- Cost \$8,000-\$33,000? Per Chat GPT, Sam doesn't have experience or know if this is accurate
- Contract with someone to set up the system, then RCC/ACFC/volunteers take over?
 - Should use someone who is current and up to date on modern wildlife monitoring practices and technologies
- Research local groups that could do this. A few ideas to start:
 - Sue Morse
 - Brandon Benedict (Chittenden County Forester)
 - Andrea Shortsleeve (Fish & Wildlife)
 - Jens Hilke (Fish & Wildlife)
- Call Andrea for ideas?
 - Cost
 - Staff Availability
 - Any recommendations for contractors
- Work with Dan Wolfson (most recent ACFC appointee, has background in wildlife management)

9:15 p.m. - Potential projects

- Dying ash trees along interstate in Richmond
 - On private land, what can we do here?
 - Sam knows many of the landowners, could assist with communication
- Revisit list of river projects from 2024
- Bindweed removal on Volunteer's Green

9:32 p.m. Adjourn