

RICHMOND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday Sept 13, 2022

7:30 PM

Minutes:

Commissioners in attendance: Judy Rosovsky, Kate Kreider, Bob Low, Max Krieger, Kit Emery, Elizabeth 'Ibit' Wright

From public: Jim Feinson

7:30 p.m. Public comments and introductions

7:35 Appoint minutes taker; approve June, July and August minutes

- Max Krieger taking minutes
- July minutes approved
 - o 5 approving
 - Bob, Max, Kit, Kate, Judy
 - o Ibit abstained
- August minutes approved
 - o Unanimously approved

7:45 Additions, amendments to agenda

- Discuss the conservation reserve fund renewal process (due in March)
 - o To discuss in matters arising
 - We would like the quarterly reports on reserve fund amount

7:50 Possible Parking CRF request or amendment

- The written proposal did not make to the commission for review, but Jim Feinson is here to discuss
- The various commission members feel comfortable discussing
- The plan:
 - o Re-direct funds from permitting a lot at the Beacon Preserve to instead go toward designing/permitting more permanent parking on the bombardier meadow
- The Richmond Land Trust (RLT) has an easement on Bombardier meadow
 - o 1 year ago ask the RCC for funding to study the Beacon Preserve parking and hopefully improve that
 - The initial design work at Beacon has been submitted, they have discussed the findings with the Select Board, but have not moved forward with permitting
 - The future of the permitting is uncertain at this point so the remaining funds are tied up
 - o RLT also wants to study improving Bombardier and has "leftover" funds from what they budgeted for Beacon
 - They would get engineering plans with these funds
 - They have discussed with VHCB which is the co-easement holder (they are OK)
 - VHCB has approved the seasonal parking prior

- The decision was made that Jim and RLT would return with a separate application and instead of reallocating funds, they would ask for separate funds (as the RCC has enough, and would like to see a more permanent solution at Beacon)
- This will most likely be on the agenda for the October meeting

8:00 Update on Gillet Pond (because Jim F. is here)

- The project was awarded federal funds, but these come with complications that will most likely result in the project going to bid in 2023, and construction in 2024
 - o ~\$250,000 in fed funds
 - o This should allow for completion
- They should be cognizant of the RCC fund sunset
- So far the ecological assessments have been positive but the process needs to be re-done partially under federal regulations

8:05 Ecology and recreation review meeting in Richmond continued: Speakers and subcommittee.

See list in July 2022 minutes replicated here:

- “Names of speakers we suggested who might talk in the series: Matt Leonard, Ethan Tapper, Jens Hilke, Wright Preston, Liz Thompson, possibly someone from the state.
- On the trails side, Max suggests:
 - Nick Bennet, Executive Director of VMBA
 - Director of the Green Mountain Club
 - o Other speakers and ideas listed in the July and August minutes
- Dan Schmidt to check his list of names to add to the above list. (Dan isn’t here this meeting)
- We might ask VT Master Naturalist Program for ideas and Forest, Parks and Recreation Rec folks, and Richmond Rec Committee.
- Goals:
 - o Provide a venue to discuss conservation, trails, and recreation
 - o Themes:
 - Challenges & opportunities of Recreation and Ecology
 - Conflict resolution
 - o Ibit submits it should be a “non-controversial” title
 - o What does a realistic balance of conservation and recreation look like?
- Would it be helpful to have a sub-committee? (discussed in August minutes)
 - o Brad Elliot is interested
 - o Dan (not here) was mentioned as being interested
- The Commission votes to setup a sub committee
 - o Judy to ask for volunteers (maximum of 3)
 - o The purpose will be to do the background work on the event(s) and bring that to the commission

8:30 Poison parsnip control and management – RCC role; next steps

- Judy is involved in the noxious weed program in Vermont
 - o Poison parsnip is the same family as edible parsnip
 - o There isn’t any State money to control it from the State

- It would then be up to the Town to address it...
- It is spread by mowing, but you can mow in a way to stop spreading
 - We should look into what time of year it is best removed
 - (most likely spring, as mentioned in July minutes)
- They have strong roots... so physical removal is often necessary
- RCC could fund and/or organizing events to remove invasives
 - Could we fund a survey?
- To be put on the agenda for next time to discuss further
 - Perhaps to educate the public
 - Be prepared for the spring to tackle the issue
 - Jon Kart recommended getting in touch with Elizabeth Spinny (who only works with state lands)
 - Judy is a licensed applicator and could help
- How involved do we want to be in invasive removal in general?
 - Education and outreach?
 - Tackle physical parcels?
 - Encourage orgs to apply as needed?
 - More discussion needed

8:45 Consider temporary revolving RCC chair

- Bob thinks it is a good idea
- Judy proposes doing an alternative chair idea:
 - Judy does one meeting & an RCC member does the next, back and forth
 - This would allow more folks to run meetings and to be more involved in leading the commission
- Judy would remain the “Chair” but running the meetings would fall on whoever volunteered
 - Judy would communicate with the town, etc.
 - The person running the meeting could help get the materials with Judy, put the agenda together, etc.
 -
- Ibit is in favor
 - She would volunteer for December
- The commission in general is in favor
- If commissioners feel they want to volunteer for this, they can let Judy know anytime
 - Judy will remind folks

8:55 Fern protection – no trespassing doesn’t work on public land. Need delegate to talk to Gabriel Firman (landowner) and police chief. I have failed to do this so another volunteer would be great.

- Deferred until a later meeting

9:05 Possible re-submission of ACFC trail review CRF request (if so, we may place this item earlier in agenda)

- The proposal wasn't received in time
- RCC to call a special meeting when possible to hear the request
- We will invite Jim F. to re-submit the Bombardier field parking request as well

9:15 Updates –Rivershore erosion: JR emails with Ravi and FOWR

- Friends of Winooski need to put in the application (or the Town)
 - o Might strengthen the chances if multiple groups are involved
 - o RLT
 - o River conservancy, etc.
- Could potentially leverage funds to get State funds, etc.
- Current estimates on the study are around \$60k (which the CRF has in reserve)

9:25 Matters arising

- Annual CRF renewal (in March)
 - o We should prepare early
 - o Ask for slot during Town meeting?
 - o Need a manual on how to renew the fund & how to do other key commission items
 - o ***NEED TO REQUEST ITEM ON BALLOT***
 - Can we request a ballot measure that the
 - “RCC renewal is automatic every year unless a ballot measure requesting renewal is presented”
 - o A ballot measure shall be automatically added every 5 years
- RCC Finances
 - o We asked for a quarterly accounting of what the RCC has in reserve... they haven't provided it
 - o Should RCC have a “treasurer” or other title to track the funds?
 - Bob has been doing it informally
- State Conservation Commission meetings
 - o We should request membership and ensure at least one of us attends
- June minutes still need to be approved (they keep getting missed)
 - o Bring up next meeting
- Special Meeting:
 - o Monday the 26th, 7pm
 - Judy to send out a Doodle poll
- Meeting with Ravi, Michele & Jon

9:30 Adjourned (9:19)