

Committee members and others present: Joe Cotten, Elliott Waring, Kate Wanner, Hayden Smith, Matt Foster, Gordon Young, Maxfield English, Mike, ...

7:11 meeting started

Old Business

- Meeting minutes approved for 25 April 2022
- Bourne will receive their appraisal soon and we will know by next meeting their decision.
- Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB): Main funding source for town forests. They are our backup if the Whisper funding does not come through. We are still having a back and forth with the Whisper grant people and discussing how they are tweaking the rules and how the rules might impact the funding for our property.
- Planning Commission Update: We are at a holding point at this point.
- Waste Water at the school is still being discussed and we are in the exploratory stage still. We are inching forward in this arena.

New Business

- Outreach committee update: We want to identify items for a new community survey. Committee was looking for clarity on what we will do with the forest. Town Forest is suggested for its simplicity. There was a conversation regarding if we should find out from others their thoughts on the name. The Wolcott Community Forest language has been used to demonstrate how a community is involved in how it is used and how it is protected. We are considering a more thorough survey to determine what people want for the forest. Bourne property has VASC access on their property and we should be considerate of the current snow mobile usage on the property and this could impact funding if we were to stop it. It is not a problem for us considering restricting new snowmobile routes. If we choose to restrict hunting or trapping we would need to provide a lot of reasons as to why we don't want it in our usage. This is because we are in talks to receive state funding. There is thought to ask someone to come in from Fish and Wildlife to discuss trapping to educate the community. Kate spoke to examples of how other communities outlined in the usage documents how they restricted hunting and trapping due to a variety of reasons such as housing density, and a lot of trail usage. Social media was discussed and how Huntington was not used much in their outreach. A Facebook page might be helpful, but do not put too much effort into it. They did use a lot of sandwich boards, and flyers. It might be good to use sandwich boards at our current stop lights. There were questions regarding how to get flyers into students' backpacks and Matt shared how that can be done. Discussion regarding reaching out to the VT Dept of Transportation is on hold until we know if we are getting the Bourne property which has the rail trail access on it. Create a logo to help with marketing our forest.
- Advisors and experts committee update: Discussion to bring out the County Forester, Emily Potter (802-622-4230 emily.potter@vermont.gov), to one of our meetings or to go out for a walk of the property with the Forester. There was discussion on doing more walks throughout different times of the years. Andrea Shortsleeve from Fish and Wildlife (802-479-4439, andrea.shortsleeve@vermont.gov) would be a good resource or Nick Fortin (802-786-3860, nick.fortin@vermont.gov), who does work with deer for Fish and Wildlife. RJ Thompson at Vermont Huts Association (rj@vermonthuts.org,

802-881-3284) would be another good consideration if we were to get the Bourne property. We could record the experts portion of our meetings and allow those recordings to be accessed by community members after the meeting. Huntington did this and publicized the meetings in advance.

- Stewardship Plan Editors Committee Proposal: Conversation about how we can break into smaller groups to work on the various parts of the document. Gordon asked for a couple of volunteers to help on the plan. Gordon proposed that for the next meeting he will bring some thoughts to the process for creating the conservation plan. It would be good to bring some of the document completed and to bring it back to the whole group for discussion and comment.
- There is thought to creating a finance committee. Regarding short term financial needs we should work with the town and if the town cannot support the purchase or financial need that we should then contact Kate Wanner to see if she can support our needs. Moving forward we would need to create a budget plan and submit it to the town select board to potentially provide access to money from the town budget. Mike brought up the need for maintenance to maintain our trails once they are built. We are hoping to have \$20,000 in starter funds for maintenance after all is built with the help of the VOREC grant.
- Environment/Wildlife Stewardship proposed committee: A committee that is an expert on what we have in our forest. Focus on wildlife conservation issues and biology education for what is important about our forest. Potential money available for maintaining fields and not cutting hay until after nesting is done. The biologist, Matt Peters, who has already studied our land and created the ecological assessment he completed for us would be good to reach out to in order to provide presentations for us on our Forest.
- Potential enrollment in Bobolink Project, if applicable, or at a minimum, follow their guidelines <https://vt.audubon.org/conservation/bobolink-project>

Next Steps:

- Stewardship plan
- Building community engagement in creating the stewardship plan
- Logo development
- Barbecue planning for public out reach (Aug 26)

Adjourned at 8:49