Wolcott Community Forest Committee, General Meeting Notes, 5/11/23

1. Call to Order
2. Org actions
    - request to go over timeline for VOREC grants
    - meeting notes:
        - one correction requested
            - Luke: states mountain bike trails planned and approved under VOREC grant; this was not approved by this committee; checked the minutes of past meetings, but there was no record of a discussion
                - Gordon: specific language to change?
                    - we're revisiting this item later on the agenda
        - motion to approve notes? passed unanimously
3. Public comment
    - none
4. TPL report (Kate)
    - notice from community forest program; ranking all projects by May 25
        - 30-60 days after, we'll get our clearance if secured
    - submitted grant application to Conservation Alliance
    - compiling legal docs for Select Board
    - working to finalize survey for affordable housing lot
    - Hayden: working to schedule Phase 2 study
    - VOREC grant
        - Work was started before forest committee was formed (in 2021), due to influx of Federal money
        - worked with Select Board and planning commission to design and build a trail system in town forest
        - grant has been finalized ($198,000 approved for list of identified tasks)
        - State gave money for a specific list of tasks.
            - 5 miles of multiuse trails
            - 2 kiosks
            - 1-2 parking lots
            - Bridge for the school trail
        - have until Dec 2024 to spend these funds
        - Sinuosity starting on school property, to match up to town forest trails at a later date
            - Dave: do they still want a bridge to the rec fields?
                - Kate: yes; needs to wide enough for a wheelchair, but not a car
                    - est. cost:
                    - span: 40 ft long by 4 ft wide
        - Kate: not under the purview of the Forest Committee
            - [unknown]: will there be a trails subcommittee? when would this group form and begin this work?

        - contracts have been signed with Sinuosity, so they can be formed when Sinuosity is ready for them
    - Gordon: have to balance getting people excited and working with actually acquiring the property; need to connect this energy closer to the closing date
        - Need to complete impact studies, etc. too
    - Luke: do we know what resources they have?
        - Gordon: yes, there primary focus is trail design and construction
            - There are plenty of local examples

5. Mapping subcommittee
    - Luke: volunteers are using a GPS unit to collect data and compile using specialized software
        - Rick Dyer brought in (AMP forester) to assess if there were water quality issues
            - introduced an app for this purpose
        - Gordon: if improper practices by previous landowner, it would become town's problem?
            - Luke: yes; any pre-existing impact we would be accountable for
                - closing off existing infrastructure would benefit us
            - Dave: if roads are converted to trails, we have to remediate
            - Gordon: may be a good use for VOREC funds
    - Kate: will you input survey results into the device?
        - Luke: yes
    - DJ: can we connect the efforts of the subcommittee and Kate's team?
        - Dave: want to know where the physical boundaries are so that we can observe activity on neighboring properties (logging, etc)
    - Gordon: possibly convince the town to buy some devices

6. Drafting subcommittee

- Gordon: work in a small group to accelerate the process, not to exclude
    - we have a draft that we would like to review, and reach consensus
        - then bring it to the Select board, possibly even next week
    - 4 topics of discussion
        - standing committee
            - folks who live here who are
        - decisions regarding types of recreation in the initial plan
            - funders are looking for this language, and our position
                - HUNTING: yes
                - FISHING: yes
                - TRAPPING: majority yes; opened discussion
                    - NRLT easement, is it required to allow it?

        - Dave: no
    - Allowed for management of nuisance populations as determined by...
    - amended language approved by majority, one abstention
- DOGS: yes
- HORSES: yes
- BIKES: discussion
    - no E-Bikes?
        - amend to not allow initially?
            - no e-bikes
- snowmobiles: yes
- ATVs: yes
- events:
    - add according to Stewardship Plan
- camping: yes
- fires: yes
- swimming: yes
    - invite further discussion

7. Adjourn (8:10pm)

Not discussed due to lack of time:

- priorities regarding forest management
- current use