Wolcott Community Forest Committee

Special meeting on Friday, February 23, 2024
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

At the **Wolcott Town Office**
or join the **online Zoom Meeting**:
Meeting ID: 814 3120 2980
Passcode: 944699

Notes

Attending: Gabe, Kelly, Gilly, Joe, Luke, Brooke (Sinuosity), Mariah (Sinuosity), Gordon, Dave, Roger

Online: Sheila, Hayden, DJ, Kelly B

1. Call to order (5:40 pm)
2. Public comment
    i. none
3. Discussion (5:40 pm)
    - Presentation: Updated Concept Trail Map for the Wolcott Community Forest – by Sinuosity
        i. Mariah: Once all partner agencies have moved through the approval process, then we can begin seeking permits, flagging out routes, etc.
            1. We currently do not have any permits for this project. We can see what we need, and then apply for them once we have the design.
            2. Only one permit needed that we have not worked with yet (Natural Heritage)
        ii. Gordon: what are the interests of the other agencies? What are they trying to protect? No need to recant whole process, but an overview would be helpful, to educate the committee
            1. Mariah: 7 potential permits needed (floodplains, stream alteration/crossing, US Army Corp, wetlands,

stormwater, non-game/natural heritage, Act 250, local zoning); more than any other project we've done; previous work was based on initial concept; will have to go back and make sure that our previous work is enough or whether more work is necessary; full Act 250 process on school property, but not for the other parcel(s); have to educate new people along the way as we move through this project

2. Brooke: need to go through our construction processes and methods for each area
3. Luke: I wonder if there are buffers that apply, roads, trails, etc.?
    a. Mariah: Nothing discovered so far
4. Gordon: we've reviewed the map and feel good about it? But have a few questions?
    a. Anything else we should know and understand at this time?
    b. Hayden: let's just review the questions from last meeting
    c. Bridge plan and money: [Brooke] budget was based on a conceptual design; as it settles, the funding is distributed to areas that may be have been under considered (parking for ex.); [Mariah] costs have changed since the initial submission; one trail is flagged, the finer details are identified and budget is allocated accordingly; inflation has impacted our initial conceptual budget

i. [Gordon] 2 concerns – if not getting the bridge, do we still have that funding?
ii. [Mariah] it all hinges upon agreed upon conceptual design; alternative plan for the road requires conceptual map; [Brooke] as long as there is an agreed upon plan, the approved funding will be there; there will be a bridge for the new route, just smaller
iii. [Gordon] just want to be sure that we are getting our money's worth, due diligence; there are likely people in the town that think along those lines, so transparency serves us well
iv. [Brooke] working to complete the project; there is usually more money for a project of this side; we will be working hard to maximize value and achieve all of the goals
v. [Gordon] sorry to be rude about it, but as the project goes on, we just want to ensure transparency
vi. [Mariah] Hayden and TPL hold the grant; they are the ones who deal directly with VOREC
vii. [Gordon] Maxfield and his high school class can build kiosks for us, with details

d. Volunteers:

Wolcott Community Forest Committee

Special meeting on Friday, February 23, 2024
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

i. [Brooke] like to engage community will help clearing the trails after the cuts are made; minimalist construction approach to minimize damage; est. 2.3 miles of trails will be hand built (18-24 inches in width, natural soils, working around trees, primarily with hand tools); 1 mi machine built with mini excavators (2.5 to 4 ft width depending on character of existing logging roads, etc.)
ii. [Mariah] need to identify any trees to be cut (3 in. or larger)
    1. [Hayden] needs to be contained in the map and communicated to Emily Potter and easement holders; must be in the forest management plan
iii. [Gordon] VHCB will likely go through the forester as the go-between?
    1. [Hayden] yes, we need to push Emily to get the forest plan done; any areas with trail "treatments" need to be marked
iv. Trail-building volunteer organization with insurance, etc.
    1. Ex. Vermont Mountain Bike association

Wolcott Community Forest Committee

Special meeting on Friday, February 23, 2024
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

v. Hauling brush, carrying lumber, some digging, sign installation, root trimming

e. Sensitive areas/rare plants:

i. [Brooke] incorporated buffers and rare plants areas into the plan; pink trail -will work with natural heritage folks to ensure it is done correctly; designed to avoid low wet areas as a matter of course, which serves to avoid sensitive areas as well

ii. [Brooke] will write a recreation plan; usually done before funding is approved

f.

- Review time line and requirements for trail construction
  - i.
- Q & A
  - i.

4. Adjourn (6:30 pm)