Wolcott Community Forest Committee

General Meeting Notes
March 14, 2024, 6 pm – 8 pm

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

Attending: Roger, Kelly, Gilly, Dave, Jack, DJ, Gabe, Gordon
Online: Linda Martin, Joe, Maxfield, Hayden, Sheila

Notes

1. Call to order (6:04 pm)
2. Organizational actions
    - Amendments to agenda
        - Vote for temporary chair
            - Nominated Roger
                - Declined as he has to take notes, run the zoom
            - Nominated Gilly (moved Kelly, second Gabe)
                - voted Aye, unan.
    - Approve minutes from last meeting
        - General Meeting 2/8
            - Moved Kelly, second Gabe
                - Voted Aye, unan.
        - Special meeting, 2/23
            - Moved Roger, second Kelly
                - Voted Aye, unan.
3. Public comment
        - none
4. Land purchase updates (6:10 pm)
    - Status report from TPL
        - [Hayden]

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- Bedell parcel, environmental issues
    - Old telephone pole, contaminants around the pole; determining the extent of the contamination; could be 12 ft diameter or more
    - Working with Stone Construction to correct the issues; taking longer than expected; must be reviewed by several agencies; based on conversations with site manager, likelihood that cleanup won't be completed until late June (best case scenario); based on how fast documentation can be completed
    - [Gilly] is that on the Bedell property?
        - Yes
    - [Gilly] does that put off Sinuosity?
        - Yes; they cannot do any new construction until after closing; they can flag, but little else
    - [Gilly] Since this is out of our control, is there any possible grace period for the VOREC grant money?
        - That's a great question; not sure
        - Shared conceptual trail design to the Select Board (approved) and VT Housing Board (approved), NRLT is currently reviewing it; once approved Sinuosity will update the budget and scope of work and submit it to VOREC with an updated timeline to consider if it is even possible
    - [Gilly] So there is more paperwork that needs to be submitted, and we could make a request at that time?

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        - Don’t know; the deadline is Dec 31 for the work to be completed; hopefully we’ll have some answers by next meeting
    - [Dave] were soil samples taken at the HFH site?
        - Yes, we will be taking samples from that site; this will determine the scope of work and budget for that site as well
- [Gilly] touching base on moving the shed that is over the property line…
    - [Hayden] this shed is just over the property line, and has been complicating the process; landowner wants to get this resolved; has been kicked around through several agencies; can’t have any structures on the property; just looking to get this done
    - [Dave] we expect to be able to move it by the end of March; needs to be moved 10 ft
    - [Hayden] Thanks Dave; just keep us in the loop
    - [Gilly] looks like this will be resolved shortly and won’t affect closing
- [Gilly] what about the structure at the pond?
    - [Hayden] already demolished and removed; flattened and re-naturalized (bare soil); no sign of a building ever being there
    - [Dave] recommendation that the brush should be cleared from the dam, but the trees seem like they are securing the dam; could you confirm the need for this? There is a ditch that could use some stones, which would seem to be more useful

- [Hayden] I can follow up on this; it was recommended by the engineer to remove them to prevent potential damage downhill; but we can follow up on this and clarify the reason; could possibly have them come and speak at a future meeting
- [Jack] we have experience with this; seems intuitive that they would stabilize the dam, but as they grow, the roots seek water and eventually break the dam; it may take 50 years, but it will eventually happen; that's why when you see most dams there are no trees on them

5. New business (6:30 pm)
    - Update, Vernal Pool Program sponsored by the Vermont Center for Eco Studies
        - [Gilly] spoke with Kevin Tolan
            - Moving forward with listing the vernal pools: need to go out an identify as many as we can, then communicate them back to Kevin or Steve (his boss); will then survey them for egg masses which determine if they are vernal pools or not
                - [Roger] window of time?
                    - [Gilly] I think before May to ensure they are not dried up
                    - [Jack] Matt Peters, who drew the maps, identified 6 or 7

- [Dave] approximate date in April to go out and survey?
    - [Gilly] will it be too wet?
    - [Dave] tentatively 2nd or 3rd weekend in April?
        - [Kelly] 20th of April would work for us
- [Kelly] we use our phones to plot lat. and long.; 10am in the morning
    - [Dave] we'll lock it down
    - [Jack] I have the right map to use
- [Gabe] only on the Bourne property? Nothing on Biddell?
    - [Jack] not that we've seen

6. Ongoing (7:00 pm)
    - Update, Subcommittee for Speakers and Education
        - FY24 Town budget approved
            - [Roger] some money in the budget for it; keep your ears open for possible speakers as we move through the year; likely later in the year
        - [DJ] We should consider a celebration for the new Town Forest, hopefully before the snow falls; likely won't be completely constructed; should save some of those funds for that
            - [Hayden] if in the upper field, may not need the trail system to be opened up yet; will likely be cleared, plenty of parking; Sinuosity will be contracting parking lot construction out and shouldn't affect trail

construction; we have a team that facilitates public celebrations; might have some speakers from organizations that helped secure the funding
    - [Jack] celebration is absolutely in order; NRLT would be able to assist with some of those costs
    - [DJ] we should start planning this now; would need to give speakers advance notice if we're going to do this; before hunting season, of course; leaf season, guided walks would be lovely
    - [Kelly] it's an accessible location, too, so more people can move through it.
    - [DJ] will get together with Gordon and the subcommittee to brainstorm ideas
    - [Gilly] other potential speakers?
- [Dave] Any updates on flood buyouts?
    - [Linda] 3 have been approved, including Westover property; all have agreed to the appraised value and we are moving forward to the next step
    - [Gilly] will these properties be under the purview of the town forest?
        - [Linda] they don't connect, except for Westover property
    - [Hayden] Kate was looking at the agreement that Tammy signed and it needs some updates; she will have to sign the updated survey
        - [Linda] how would you like to do this?
        - [Hayden] I'll follow up after the meeting
- [Dave] has an engineer looked at the bridge on East Elmore Rd?

- [Linda] no, not at that site

- [Dave] if they do at some point, could they inspect the bridge going to the Biddell property?
    - [Linda] the state usually inspects bridges, but won't inspect this one; I did send Dylan up; I'll follow up and see if I can find information

7. Adjourn (6:56 pm)