Wolcott Forest Stewardship Committee

Notes from public meeting, Thursday, March 13, 2025
6 pm – 8 pm

Attending: Gabe, Jack, Gordon, Mike, Roger
Online: Maxfield
Quorum? yes

Agenda

1. Call to order (6:05 pm)
2. Organizational actions
    a. Amendments to agenda
        i. none
    b. Approve minutes from last meeting
        i. Reformat notes to make them less extensive; revisit next meeting
3. Public comment
        i. none
4. Ongoing
    a. Trail building update from Sinuosity (6:10 pm)
        i. No budget available for trail work on the Bourne parcel beyond the initial scope. Will have to explore other options for erosion control off old logging roads, etc.
    b. Maintenance activities – proposed/planned/completed (6:20 pm)
        i. Dave's letter to Jack: Requested activities seem to be OK. In the future, such requests should be sent directly from the Stewardship Committee. Requesting Committee to formally approve Dave's list of requests.
            1. [Review of Letter by committee]
            2. Intent to diversify the landscape for wildlife and visitors
            3. Generally good ideas. **Will need to add some more details and then submit the workplan to NRLT for**

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approval. Also, send the list to Emily Potter for review in relation to the FMP

ii. "No Motorized Vehicles" signs

1. Received, at Town Office

2. Not hung yet; Gordon will follow up

5. New business (7:00 pm)
    a. Update from NRLT re: adjoining property
        i. Alton Smith's property, 55 acres of adjoining land; willed his property to NRLT, with the intention of it being conserved under conservation easement, and sold/gifted to the Town Forest
        ii. There are some concerns about removing the property from the tax rolls (currently, taxes are approx. $6,500/year)
            1. Proposed carving off buildings for a residence, donate remaining 53 acres? One possibility
            2. Another possibility, donate entire property, could be a parking area and nature center
            3. Possibly make it a HUD Association/VT Huts building
            4. Maybe carve out the buildings for Habitat for Humanity
            5. Potential for a through trail and additional access for forest management
        iii. Easier method to conserve it might be to amend the current Forest easement rather than start from scratch; NRLT has some concerns about the existing buildings and how that would affect it
        iv. Motion (Mike): Approve a formal recommendation to NRLT, to donate the property discussed (formerly owned by Alton

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Smith) to the Town of Wolcott to add to the Town Forest, with the intent to explore merging with the existing conservation easement, to carve off a portion to maintain as a residential home site, and to conserve the rest with some considerations to allow for site access (such as a parking lot and trail head)

1. **Roger, second**
2. **Passes unanimously**
    a. **Share meeting notes with Jack**

b. Continue discussion re: forest management – logging, erosion controls, etc.
    i. Mike: Recommend that we build a logging operation on the Bedell plot
        1. with a landing area that would become a parking lot
        2. create skid roads that would become trails
            a. possibly $45,000-$55,000 for the town
                i. Roger: Similar to what Luke said at the last meeting; we would like to see more detailed proposals if we are considering doing any type of infrastructure/logging related to forest management, erosion control etc., as well as options for funding (grants, etc.), to allow for thorough review

c. Discussion of Westover property, Select Board and Planning Commission plans
    i. Gordon: Many possibilities for that property; great access point for the Bourne parcel; want to protect it from overuse;

would be good to get out in front of the development for that property; want to assess it for any invasive species and neutralize them; potential for a public restroom

1. Focus on recreational opportunities: walking and biking trails, access to other parts of the forest, potential fishing area along the river; make it part of the town forest; possibly add it under conservation easement

6. Adjourn (8 pm)