

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 19th, 2022; 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present: Phil Huffman, Bob Cook, PJ Telep, Curt Lindberg, Bruno Grimaldi, James Donaldson

Members Absent: Chris Loomis, Ted Joslin

Public in attendance: None

Curt opens the meeting at 6:40 after some Zoom technical difficulties.

Review and Approve Minutes – Minutes of August 18th, 2022 minutes approved by unanimous vote after changes to add who was absent. Add that Bob was present. Page 2 one typo first sentence of last paragraph. First bullet re CD - it is Northfield Bank. 12 month flex CD which paid 0.5%. Add landscape architect on page 1 3rd line to lay out a proposal for the monument site, trails and parking. Motion to approve by Leo and seconded by Bruno.

Wu Town Forest Trails - Chris has put in a request for a cost quote from Wood & Wood for signage for Wu town forest. Curt suggested adding the WCC logo to the new signs. Leo - ARPA funds could be available to pay for the new signage. Bob asked about parking expansion observation. Wu sub-group was asked what type of signs are being considered - primarily entering private land signs and directional signs.

Virginia Farley Memorial At Tardy property and invasive species: Phil - not a ton to report. Group has reached out to one landscape architect but haven't heard back yet. Phil pledged to share an itemized budget but doesn't have that yet and will wait to hear from the landscape architect for more details. Regarding fundraising effort - so far there is about \$10,000 in donations and VLT is the recipient of those donations and acts as the fiscal agent. Shooting for an overall budget of \$60,000.

Leo suggests exploring reforesting the knotweed area on the north end of the Tardy parcel near the bridge. Leo contacted Redstart consulting at the suggestion of Tony D'Amato and passed the info from Bill Musson to the WCC members. Leo suggests having Bill Musson look at the WCC knotweed efforts and specific parcels. Would cost about \$300 to \$350 for Bill to come for half the day to consult. Leo is requesting to spend that amount for the consultation. James, Curt, Phil

support this. Bruno says we have the money to support this. Leo - if going beyond Austin and Tardy parcel then it might be more than half the day and would cost more. **Motion by Phil to schedule an onsite meeting with Bill Musson for an information exchange capped at \$700 from the Commission's FY23 operating budget. Bruno seconded. Unanimous in favor.**

Bob to Phil - any consideration about the ease that the property floods? Bob suggests talking with people who are most familiar with how that property floods like the Gaylord's. Phil agrees to take that into consideration and the Friends of the Mad River have done studies valley-wide regarding how the Mad River floods. And could seek first-hand anecdotal evidence from Hadley. Phil - safe to say that the memorial planning group is considering that any physical elements would be flood-resilient/durable.

Scrag Trails RFP and Next Steps: James - Last Monday the Select Board approved posting an RFP for Scrag trail work. James submitted it to the Professional Trails Builder Association. Sinuosity, who did the planning work, is not going to submit a proposal. James reached out to Josh Ryan of Timber and Stone and is considering the project for next year. James plans to reach out to a few more groups. Josh seemed to think that 1 mile of handbuilt trail is a lot and suggested VYCC or the Green Mountain Club.

James is adding yellow flagging to the start and end points of trail segments to make it clear. James also reached out to John Atkinson who is local. Phil - would like a copy of the RFP and would like to participate at the bid meeting. October 28th for bid meeting and responses due by December 16th.

Austin Parcel Fall Plans: Curt - Walked around Austin to look at what should be addressed this Fall. Planning to spend a few hours this Fall to do some inventory and clean up work. Could remove plastic tubes and stakes from the larger trees. Need to mark where replacement trees should go where some have died. Plan to place an order from Interval for 100 stems at \$573. Will organize another morning to do the tree plantings. **Motion by Leo to purchase 100 stems for the Austin Parcel through the Interval for the amount of \$573. Money to be used from the Annual Conservation Fund. Seconded by Phil. Unanimous approval.**

ARPA Committee update - Leo - meeting scheduled the day after tomorrow. Bruno - question - ARPA money has to be spent by the end of 2026 and committed by the end of 2024. Bruno - has there been discussion to use ARPA money to address housing shortage. Leo - the Mad River Housing Coalition has been asked to consider this.

James - what was the total funds received? Leo = \$506,000. Rules do not allow for home construction but do allow for land banking to purchase land that could be used for housing. Leo will continue to forward on info to the WCC members.

Financial Matters: Bruno - Reviewed balances of various funds. Curt - one additional expense is transporting knotweed that is on 20 pallets. Curt and Bob met with Annie to discuss options

including asking Eric Howes who does mowing on town properties to move knotweed material to the Warren knotweed dump which is at the Sugarbush snowmaking pond. Eric is interested in doing the work. Eric will put together an estimate for the work. In the future, considering a town property location to dump pulled knotweed.

Other Business: Next meeting is October 17th and November 21st. Leo should we add the Association of Vermont Conservation Commission's liability form for volunteers? One sheet page that absolves the town from certain claims from volunteers. Broader issue that the town would need to address above the WCC. Suggest asking Annie, town administrator, for her thoughts on it.

AVCC has an annual meeting at Lake Morey and it would be nice to have a representative from WCC there. Phil cannot make it. Bruno may try to make it.

Executive Session: Phil made a motion to go into Executive Session, Leo seconded.

Bruno made motion to come out of Executive session, Phil seconded. Out of executive session at 8PM and no action taken.

Motion to adjourn by Bruno and seconded by Leo. All in favor.