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Rockingham Conservation Commission

MONDAY, May 18th, 2015

7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:09. Present: Mike Ghia, Guy Payne, Paul Wilson, Devin Smith, and Peter Bergstrom; Absent: Alan Fowler, Fred Bennett, Rick Holloway, Tom Herson,

1. Approve Minutes of April Meeting – Moved Guy, second Paul. One question (Guy): Do we have a chair and co-chair in bylaws? **Guy will check.**

Alteration to the Agenda – added Verizon cell tower letter.

2. Recruitment and Logistics

Website updates (Fred and Alan)—both absent, and Mail Chimp and general publicity—Mike would like to do more emailing and would like help with this from other Commission members. Peter volunteered to help him, including posting links to agendas and minutes on the RCC web page. There are about 180 names on the Mail Chimp list.

3. Planning Goals and Projects for the Year Continued from April Mtg

Guy reported that Susan Brace has vernal pools on her property in Bartonville and would be willing to host a public event there next spring, showing how to map vernal pools. Peter, Fred and Devin volunteered in April to coordinate future public events and field trips, and Paul agreed to join them. **Devin agreed to lead the group.** We need to plan events months ahead to get free publicity.

Mike would like to offer four public events a year, including a spring wildflower walk led by Tim Morton, as we discussed before. Tim agreed to lead this at the VA Sugarbush, late April or early May. **Peter and Mike will work on development and publicity for hiking trails.**

Guy asked for help with the Energy Committee. Devin agreed to help. Guy needs help finding energy experts in Rockingham; most of the ones he knows are in Brattleboro.

Alan and Rick are our recycling subcommittee, and Devin would like to do education about composting; he gets clear leaf bags that the town picks up, and they have quite a bit of trash in them. He has been meeting with the Green Island permaculture group, an offshoot of the Sustainable Valley Group (SVG), who might want to put on such a program. **Devin agreed to talk to its coordinator about a possible joint program with the RCC.**

4. Natural Resources

Verizon cell tower letter—Access road (near Old Darby Hill Rd, off VT 103) will impact 5,170 square feet of a Class 2 wetland buffer, within 50 feet of a wetland, so Verizon had to ask us to comment. There was no due date for comments so **Mike agreed to ask them the due date, and ask if they can email a copy of the proposal so he can share it with RCC members.**

High Meadows Flood Resiliency Grant Follow-up—no news yet.

Update on Stream and Water Body Naming Project –Recommendations/letters/Hearing. About 250 letters have gone out, and so far we've had several positive responses, none negative. Peter asked Mike if he can use Mail Chimp to publicize the June 2 meeting; Mike agreed to show him. Peter mentioned getting a map with all the names made once they are approved; Mike suggested asking Jeff Nugent for help with special maps, including the brooks that cross town lines (Skunk Hollow and Barnes brooks), which would require watershed maps.

Review of Green Up Day (Weekend) – Guy was busy and had no information. There were still a lot of tires thrown away.

River Water testing 2015 – Peter said there might be a new site added for E. coli on the lower river; the suggestion was a site near Twin Falls, but Peter suggested Covered Bridge Falls since Twin falls has no swimming.

Planting of Exotic Trees in Rockingham – **Peter agreed to ask Ellen Howard if the Tree Committee has any policy on this.**

5. Herrick's Cove and CT River

Wildlife Festival Review – Paul attended, and attendance was about 1,800, a good number.

6. Energy Committee

Municipal Solar Research Initiative Continued – no report.

Planning “New Net Zero Building” Presentation – **Guy may try scheduling one for the fall; he will ask Ann Dempsey at RFPL about possible dates.**

State Funding for Public School Biomass Heating/Energy Efficiency Projects -- \$1.6 million grant received for Windham Co., the Windham Wood Heat Initiative is working on it, and Guy is involved. Focus will move to municipal buildings later.

Municipal Building Energy Audits and Streetlight Project Update – no report. We'll discuss Energy Committee organizing and recruitment next month.

7. Announcements of Events of relevance to the RCC Mission

-Thursday May 21, Bellows Falls Waterfront Park Phase 3 at RFPL, 6:30.

-Friday May 22, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., there will be a workshop on ***Managing Your Woods with Birds in Mind*** in Dummerston, VT. Mike will post on Facebook.

-Sat. June 20, 9-2:30, River celebration at Path of Life Garden in Windsor, CRWC

-Mon. June 8, 5-7:30, “Solar 101” workshop in Brattleboro

- Mon, June 15, PACE – Property Assessed Clean Energy presentation on Efficiency VT program, in Brattleboro at Marlboro Graduate Center

8. Confirm Next Meeting **Monday, June 8th**

Adjourned at 8:52, Guy moved, Paul seconded.

Minutes prepared by Peter Bergstrom, Secretary, 5/19/15.