



Rockingham Conservation Commission
MONDAY, December 14th, 2015 7:00 pm
3rd Floor Meeting Room Town Hall

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM by Mike Ghia.

Present: Amy Howlett, Peter Bergstrom, Alan Fowler, Mike Ghia, Paul Wilson, Guy Payne, Tom Herson, Devin Smith.

Absent: Fred Bennett.

Guests: Ed Dinanny.

1. Approve Minutes of November Meeting

Moved by Amy Howlett, seconded by Guy. Approved.

Alteration to the Agenda and Guests Introductions

Ed Dinanny was introduced, to talk about Greenup Day.

2. Recruitment and Logistics

Official Welcome on board to Amy Howlett, who was appointed at the last Selectboard meeting.

3. Trails Committee

The hike up the VA ski trails on 11/22 was successful with 14 people attending. We discussed the next steps, probably a meeting of the trails committee to discuss approaching landowners about trail access. One route to explore is over the Hartley Ridge into Westminster, near the trails that we hiked, and the other is along the Saxtons River from Athens, possibly along the existing VAST trail route. Since this was formed as an RCC committee its meetings need to be warned and minutes posted. A quorum will consist of all committee members, not just the RCC members. Peter will talk to Silos Roberts about the ideal size of the committee as a result.

4. Green Up Day Coordination for Rockingham

Ed Dinanny talked about what this day accomplishes; he wants to hand off the coordination job to the RCC. The main task is getting cleanup bags to volunteers who agree to cover certain roads. He said the bags for next year have been ordered from the state committee.

Guy moved that the RCC would start coordinating this, Alan seconded. Approved. Ed suggested we still need to have one person named as the contact. Amy said she could be the contact if she got help from Guy with guidance from Ed. Devin moved that we endorse Guy and Amy as co-coordinators, Paul seconded. Approved. Ed will check if the Rotary Club will keep paying for the pizza lunch after the cleanup.

5. Coordination with Rockingham Planning Commission

Chuck Wise mentioned a possible Joint Meeting for January to review town plan draft text. We do not have a date yet.

Rewriting the Natural Resources Chapter of Town Plan. Amy is writing scenic resources, Peter is writing water resources (but not utilities), Paul is writing about birds, herps and wetlands, and his neighbor Ray Hitchcock will write the forestry section. Fred agreed previously to cover the other land resources that Paul is not covering (mainly Other wildlife Habitat), and Mike agreed to cover soils & topography as well as the night sky. Chuck Ratte sent Peter a short geology section to use. Devin suggested that we include a map of the Waits River Formation in the geology section because it has so many impacts on agricultural productivity and our flora and fauna. Further actions will be pursued by the committee.

6. Energy Committee

PACE in Rockingham—Town Meeting Vote

PACE stands for Property Assessed Clean Energy. It is another method of financing which will allow homeowners to invest in efficiency or renewable energy improvements to their homes through a special assessment tied to the property. The creation of a PACE district is the first step in making PACE available to eligible residential homeowners in the municipality. Guy got this put on the warrant for the Town Meeting on March 7th. He will also schedule a public information session about this in February; Mark Kelly from Efficiency Vermont will come for that.

Recent VECAN Meeting Review

VECAN is the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network. Guy reported there were about 250 attending with some good workshops; Guy went to one on metrics for town energy committees to show their progress. Another was about ways to track who has installed renewable energy systems in each town.

7. Natural Resources

Review of Windham County Conservation Commissions Joint Meeting

Peter reviewed his notes from the meeting and Devin added some comments. There were some ideas for possible projects from other conservation commissions that we might do in Rockingham, such as educational programs or invasives control. The next meeting will be in Putney.

Saxtons River Watershed Collaborative/ Flood Resiliency Grant Follow-up

Peter mentioned that they are setting up an education center with a stream table. He will ask if they do school visits. He described plans for the 2016 riparian tree planting in Rockingham at the FEMA

properties. There is also progress on an easement with Dick Stickney on his property along the river at dump corner.

Update on Stream and Water Body Naming Project –Hearings, Mapping, Follow-up

Peter described his recent talk with Marty Reid, state librarian, and when the proposals might come to the State Library Board. She said they might consider them at their April 12 meeting, and that she would ask reference librarians to start reviewing the name sources while we get ANR approval of the names. Peter is finishing a revised list of all the sources of names to send to her.

Recycling and Organic Waste

Rick Holloway was involved in this with Alan in charge. Devin is also interested in this topic, and mentioned this as part of a planned permaculture project of the new Saxtons River Community Building.

Vernal Pool ecology

Paul mentioned that he and Devin had discussed a scheduling presentation on this at the library on this topic, probably in March, by his wife Rebecca Chalmers. Paul will contact Anne Dempsey at the library about scheduling this. RCC also may offer a vernal pool hike in the spring. Peter is also interested in recruiting volunteers for helping at salamander crossings in the spring; there are some in Rockingham.

8. Confirmed: NEXT MEETING Monday, January 11th

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Minutes prepared by Peter Bergstrom, Secretary, 12-16-15.