



Town of Rockingham  
Town Hall, 7 Square  
PO Box 370  
Bellows Falls, VT 05101  
Voice: (802) 463-3964 Fax: (802) 463-1228  
Website: rockbf.org

## **Rockingham Conservation Commission**

MONDAY, November 9th, 2015, 7:00 pm

### Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Present: Mike Ghia, chair; Paul Wilson; Alan Fowler; Guy Payne; Peter Bergstrom; Devin Smith.  
Absent: Rick Holloway, Tom Herson, Fred Bennett  
Guests: Amy Howlett

Approve Minutes of September RCC Meeting (no quorum in October)  
Alan moved to approve, Paul seconded. Approved.

1. Membership: Rick Holloway notified Mike that he would like to resign if we have a replacement. Amy Howlett agreed to replace him and will write to the Selectboard introducing herself, and attend a meeting to be appointed. Guy moved and Alan seconded that we recommend her to the Selectboard, approved.
2. Recruitment and Logistics  
Website updates (Fred and Alan) and Mail Chimp and general publicity, information transfer  
Fred was not here, so no web site update.
3. Trail Connection possibilities between Pinnacle Lands and Rockingham—  
Public Meeting held Tuesday October 27<sup>th</sup>

Peter mentioned that new trails require Act 250 review; Silos Roberts thought we might avoid this if we used an existing snowmobile trail, but Paul was not sure, because the route would have to be slightly different. Act 250, if triggered, evaluates 10 criteria, including parking, proximity to houses and the river, etc. First step is to contact landowners along the snowmobile trail to see if they would give permission through a license, which is temporary, rather than a permanent easement.

We agreed at the 10/27 meeting to form a committee of RCC members and other interested folks, and Paul moved and Alan seconded that we do this, approved. RCC Members volunteered for this: Mike, Paul, Peter, with Peter as chair. At the 10/27 meeting, Tony Coven, Bob Gay, and Rick Cowan also said they'd be on this committee; Tony and Rick are on the Pinnacle board. Peter will send Silos this list and ask how he wants to proceed. We agreed that we should talk to property owners before we organize a group hike of possible trail routes, so they know it is happening. Peter

will contact Bucky and Carl about organizing a hike to Warner Ridge and Crystal Rock on Hartley Hill this fall, after checking with Silos.

4. Town Plan Review- Rockingham Conservation Commission committee; Rewriting the Natural Resources Chapter

Chuck Wise suggested a joint meeting of the RCC with the Planning Commission, possibly at their Wed. Dec. 9 meeting. Main topic would be the Natural Resources Chapter but there could be other topics. Amy will check whether we would need a quorum of both groups to meet. Mike will follow up with Chuck about logistics.

Peter reported that he had talked to Chuck Wise about the outline, since he included items from the Utilities chapter under Water Resources. Chuck said the Utilities chapter is required so Peter will skip those sections. Peter said Chuck Ratte agreed to write a Geology section.

5. Joint meeting of conservation commissions, Wed, Nov. 18

Peter and Devin plan to attend, and possibly Guy. Peter will bring up the new trails initiative, and writing the Natural Resources section of the Town Plan.

6. Herrick's Cove and CT River

The Silvio Conte NWR has a proposal to purchase land in the town of Windham to protect part of the West River watershed, which is controversial.

7. Energy Committee

Solar 101 – Guy said this did not run yet.

PACE in Rockingham – Guy moved that this be put on the warning for the Town Meeting, to ask that the town create a PACE district, and Alan seconded. This a low-interest loan program for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades, from Efficiency Vermont. Approved.

Municipal Solar Initiative:

Guy and Alan met with a rep from Green Lantern, Ralph Meima, about developing municipal solar in Rockingham. They had no quorum of the Energy Subcommittee so could not take action. If we use town land, town would get about \$30K/yr. We can't participate on the proposed large array in Brattleboro because we are in the Southern Windsor Waste Management District. The opportunity to do municipal solar may end in 2016 due to a cap on how much solar power GMP can use. Once we have an application we should get in before the cap is met. There would be no cost to the town.

Guy moved that we ask the Selectboard to issue an RFP for a 500 KW photovoltaic system connected to the grid at a place to be determined; Paul seconded.

Discussion: Mike proposed adding that the RFP would "include siting criteria that avoid using prime agricultural soils." We agreed to accept that addition. The amended motion now reads: "The RCC moved to ask the Selectboard to issue an RFP for a 500 KW photovoltaic system connected to the grid at a place to be determined, using siting criteria that avoid prime agricultural soils." Alan moved and Paul seconded this amended motion,

which passed. Guy will present this at the next Selectboard meeting when he can get on the agenda.

## 8. Natural Resources

High Meadows Flood Resiliency Grant Follow-up: Peter said he attended a workshop for riparian landowners on 10/17, which was very informative.

Update on Stream and Water Body Naming Project –Hearings, Mapping, Follow-up: Peter said that of the affected municipalities, only Springfield has yet to approve its names, but he is on their Selectboard agenda for Nov. 23. He found only 5 official brook names in Rockingham, compared to 32 new or corrected names. Next step is getting approval of all 32 names by Deb Markowitz, head of the Agency of Natural Resources, which is being led by Marie Caduto.

Utility Right of Way vegetation control practices: Devin reviewed these and concluded that current practices do not pose major problems to sensitive species. No further action is needed.

### Announcements:

Devin mentioned the project to map vernal pools, and a pool that he saw on the trail up Fall Mountain. It was on the left soon after you pass the utility right of way.

Guy mentioned an upcoming workshop on Nov. 16 on wood pellet boiler systems, sponsored by the Windham Wood Heat Initiative, a program of SEON. For details see <http://www.brattleborodevelopment.com/item/modern-wood-heating-forum>

Confirm Next Meeting

**NEXT MEETING Monday, December 14th**

Adjourned: Moved by Alan, seconded by Paul, approved at 9:00.

Prepared by Peter Bergstrom, RCC Secretary, 11/12/15.