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Rockingham Conservation Commission Minutes

MONDAY, April 20th, 2015

7:00 pm

3rd Floor Meeting Room Town Hall

MINUTES

The meeting began at 7:03 with Present: Mike Ghia, Rick Holloway, Guy Payne, Fred Bennett, Devin Smith, Alan Fowler, Peter Bergstrom; Absent: Tom Herson, Paul Wilson

1. Approve Minutes of March Meeting

Moved Alan, Rick seconded, passed.

Alteration to the Agenda and Guests Introductions

None

2. Recruitment and Logistics

Officially welcoming Devin Smith to the Commission

This was done.

AVCC Tiny Grant Application

Let the group know if you have an idea for a grant application.

Website updates (Fred and Alan) and Mail Chimp and general publicity, information transfer

We discussed what was relevant to Rockingham enough to post it on our Facebook page. Mike suggested that we try to mention the local relevance when we post something from elsewhere.

Our website update (Fred and Alan)—Alan will pay for hosting and Fred will create the site. Fred will bring a laptop to a future meeting to show it to us.

3. **Annual Meeting Business**—Elections of Officers and Planning for the Year

Guy nominated Mike as Chair and Fred seconded. Devin moved that we close nominations. Mike was elected. For Co-chair, Guy nominated Rick and Fred seconded. Devin moved that we close nominations. Rick was elected. For Secretary, Peter was nominated by Rick and seconded by Alan. Devin moved that we close nominations. Peter was elected. For Treasurer, Alan was nominated by Fred and seconded by Rick. Devin moved that we close nominations. Alan was elected.

Planning for the year: We have all 9 commissioners. Mike thinks we should lead or contribute to 4 public programs a year, one per quarter. One suggestion was a program by Devin's wife Alexis on mapping vernal pools, possibly at the end of next winter. Guy mentioned a potential project for the town to buy a photovoltaic system and put it on town land. Alan suggested a recycling project, possibly a local video documentary, as well as one with Alma Beals on the Emerald Ash Borer. Rick agreed to work with Alan on recycling. Peter said he'd like us to keep working to identify hiking trails that the public can use, and letting the public know about them. We agreed to come to our next meeting with ideas for presentations we each might lead or organize.

4. Review and Follow-up from Windham County Joint Conservation Commissions Mtg

Peter reviewed the meeting that he attended on 3-25-15. He reviewed projects that commissions from other towns mentioned. Peter asked if anyone felt we should follow up on any of the projects from other commissions, and mapping vernal pools was suggested as a possibility by Guy, who thought Christine Armiger at VA or Rick Gordon at Compass School might be interested. Peter agreed to write to Christine, and Fred agreed to write to Rick about it. Mike suggested that a subcommittee draft a letter asking for help: Peter, Fred and Devin.

5. Natural Resources

High Meadows Flood Resiliency Grant Follow-up

Peter gave an update on the Rockingham part of the proposal. He mentioned Jolene Hamilton and Todd Menees who are supervising the tree planting details, and David Deen has Trout Unlimited volunteers to help planting. Peter said the group did not discuss who would maintain the trees once planted.

Update on Stream and Water Body Naming Project –Recommendations/letters/Hearing

Peter went over the project status. He reported that getting landowner addresses in Springfield is taking longer than expected. Target date for mailing is mid-May, about 2 weeks before meeting on June 2.

Potentially Planning a Guided Spring Wildflower Hike for late April or May

Peter said he'd taken Mike's suggestion to scout sites this year and plan a hike for next year. None of the commission members had suggestions for good sites with parking that are large enough to be worth going on a hike, but they agreed to look for possible sites.

Green Up Day (Weekend) Planning May 2nd

We discussed if we were going to promote it other than on our Facebook update. Guy said he would send Ed Dinanny a list of the sites with the most trash in the past, and also email Chip to see if the town will provide trucks for trash again.

River Water testing 2015

This will continue this year, possibly with one fewer site, with Margo Ghia coordinating.

Planting of Exotic Trees in Rockingham

We agreed to discuss this next month.

4. Herrick's Cove and CT River

Wildlife Festival May 3rd

Rick volunteered to make frames for signs that someone else will paint. SevWA is looking for volunteers to sit at their table.

5. Energy Committee

Municipal Solar Research Initiative Continued

Guy will talk to Chip about it; Chip said the library needs help offsetting their electricity usage, which is higher than anticipated. Rockingham would like to rely on volunteers to do the permitting if possible, supervised by the RCC.

Review of “German Community Energy Self-Sufficiency” Presentation

Guy said about 25 people came although many were from other towns, including a group from Grafton. There are 130 self-sufficient communities in Germany in terms of energy.

Planning “New Net Zero Building” Presentation

Guy is still planning one, possibly for the fall; we agreed to discuss at our next meeting.

State Funding for School Biomass Heating

SEON (Guy’s employer) has a grant for the Windham Wood Heat Initiative, focusing on school heating, but it can be for other municipal buildings. They don’t want to replace fairly new fossil fuel systems. Kim Smith (WRC) is the contact person. Rick said the Rockingham School Board was interested but has nothing budgeted for it. The Bellows Falls High School has one of the older boilers so it may be a likely candidate.

Municipal Building Energy Audits and Streetlight Project Update

No report.

6. Announcements of Events of relevance to the RCC Mission-all.

Alan reported that Rock and Hammer recently renovated and replaced all of their lights with LEDs. Rick reported that about half of the fluorescent tubes at Chroma have been replaced with LEDs.

7. Confirm Next Meeting Monday, May 11th

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Peter Bergstrom, Secretary.