

Bolton Conservation Commission

Monday, July 15, 2013

Attendance: Lars Botzjorns (Chair), Amy Ludwin, Larissa Urban, Ken Remsen, Kathy Costello, David Parot (for a portion of the meeting; he has submitted his resignation due to other commitments)

1. Approve minutes of May 20, 2013 meeting

Minutes Approved as written.

2. Science to Action (STA) project update

Community Mapping Forum at Jericho Elementary well attended by Bolton CC members – Evening was successful; maps will be developed showing what's important to people based on process that we went through that evening. Amy and Ken continue to be the CC's representatives on the Steering Committee.

- Town funding: Request from CC to Select Board to use \$1,000 of last year's funding to supplement on ground research by Arrowwood. The Select Board had said they would make a decision at tonight's meeting. When the Select Board originally reviewed the ECOS proposal the project was not asking for any funding from the town. The project was not fully funded, and the scope of the project was reduced. We are seeking the \$1,000. to partially fund some of the field work that was cut. The DRB is in favor of the proposal because their map is outdated. The Planning Commission is supportive of the project's goals, but does not have any money to contribute. At the SB meeting tonight, the SB has said that at time they are still considering the proposal, and that \$1,000 is in a reserve fund while they explore the topic. They are also hesitant due to unexpected road issues due to flooding and that impact on the Town budget. They are wondering how information gathered in field work, and then used in mapping, could affect private property rights. They will gather more feedback (including from the PC and DRB) before making a final decision.

- Wildlife sightings web site: Discussion of who should have access has taken place and what Arrowwood would do with the information. Discussion revolves around landowner identification and reliability of sightings.

-Posters for upcoming public events available to be put around town (see Ken)

3. Potholes update

Lydia of VRC said she would contact the private landowner but Lars has not heard anything. The Select Board has said they don't want to deal with the issue at the present time beyond encouraging law enforcement checks and maintaining the towing policy on the Access Road. Lars, Andrew Pond, and Ron Lafreniere have met to discuss the issue and Andrew expressed interest in serving on a subcommittee to gather user data this summer. Kathy is willing to check in with Lydia and Andrew to see what the latest thoughts are about the parking use and monitoring. The plan is to keep the Select Board updated on any discussions that take place.

4. State Lands planning – Bolton Backcountry parcel

Larissa had contacted Gary Sawyer (state forester) about becoming involved in the planning process. The acquisition went through about a month ago. The Bolton parcel is being incorporated into the existing Mt. Mansfield State Forest plan for now. Larissa hopes to get more details from Gary and will continue to be the CC's liaison with the Department. The Green Mt. Club and Catamount Trail will also be involved. Larissa will check with Amy Grover to see what state land management plans are on file at the Bolton town office.

5. Bolton Valley 4X4 Center Master Plan update

Suggestion was made by David for a CC member to be given a tour of the 4 X 4 facility to see potential impacts (esp. to high elevation and other sensitive habitats, run-off) first hand. There is some question about land ownership; the 4X4 Center may not own all the land they are using; they may be leasing from Bolton Valley. They are asking for permission to do some expansion in the next three years. Lars will take this over and ask Steve McLeod if he is also interested in being involved. There was general discussion about the amount of environmental impact to the Joiner Brook watershed from all development. The CC will be in close contact with the DRB on this issue.

6. Preston Pond Management Plan update

Not much to report. We are not ready to approve the plan. Lars has contacted VAST to get their input on the plan. The issue that is not resolved is rock climbing. Promoting it on town property can raise the liability risk; does it increase risk if rock climbing is listed as an allowed use in the Preston Pond plan? Lars has asked Ron for an opinion on this issue (the issue also came up a few years ago when CRAG-VT purchased the Upper West cliffs). CRAGVT has been a responsible partner in use of land.

Quinn Keating has been active in working on the land. He has purchased some wood for new signs and is working on trails. Quinn and Lars are working on the trail management plan.

Keith Thompson (Chittenden County forester) and Joss Besse will be working on a forest management plan. This plan will include diversifying wildlife habitat.

The idea is to combine all these pieces into one large plan and get final approval at that time.

7. Other Business

Green Mountain Club is still trying to line up permits for the bridge over the Winooski. STA towns are trying to find sponsors to fund a presentation by Sue Morse on October 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Remsen and Lars Botzjorns