



Winooski Valley Park District

Ethan Allen Homestead
Burlington, Vermont 05408

Tel: (802) 863-5744

Email: info@wvdp.org

www.WVPD.org

Fax: (802) 865-0647



Board of Trustees

Minutes of the Meeting

March 21, 2017

The meeting began at 4:35 PM

Present: Susan Gilfillan (Colchester), Tom Malinowski (Essex), Sonja Schuyler (Jericho), Nick Warner (Executive Director), Rita Dessau (Williston) Aaron Keech (Burlington) Lauren Chicote (Programs Director).

Absent: David Crawford (South Burlington)

Acceptance of minutes: Minutes of Feb 21, 2017 were reviewed and accepted.

Public Comment Period: No members of public were present for public comment.

Meeting Agenda Changes: none.

Financial Reports from WVPD and Ethan Allen Homestead:

No report was presented from Ethan Allen Homestead, as major winter storm has disrupted their schedule.

WVPD budget is doing well, with most of the expected member community contributions received. Net income is \$67,004.36. Budget report will be in new format next month.

Long Range Planning: From 4:40 PM to 5:25, Jens Hilke, the conservation planner from Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, presented a tool that his agency designed to assist with conservation planning on the municipal level. It is called BioFinder 2016. It is available to all agencies in our state, with no fee charged. This online portal for conservation planning was started 2012, pulling together 22 data sets. The first phase was to prioritize which landscapes need conservation, and then locate the natural communities that are currently being assisted by conservation work. Finally, it was to locate specific species of the 43,000 in Vermont, and to map habitat areas likely to contain endangered species. A map was designed to show where there is contiguous forest, and thus locate "biology hotspots" of diversity. Jens demonstrated a map of Stowe from 1962-2011, demonstrating a dramatic loss of forested area, despite no change in the number of individual trees. The maps can be used as a "coarse filter," helping municipalities to conserve or manage land so that diverse species can thrive.

Following Mr. Hilke's presentation, the board discussed possible ways to implement long-range planning. Nick continues to work on alternate means of funding other than current member contribution formula. He stated that Katherine Decarreau, formerly Winooski Town Manager, is now available to do consultant work. She may be able to help us adapt our current financial policies to changes that have occurred over the years. Sonja asked if the planning grant from High Meadows, of \$5-7,000, could be used to fund this and other sources of assistance. Nick

stated that “Deac” wants Charlie Baker of CCRCP to be the convener of this effort, and she would write a proposal, working with him. Sonja, “Deac”, Nick, and Charlie will meet March 27 to discuss this. Susan said we need to articulate what we want to accomplish re land conservation in future; whether specifying lower Winooski River Valley conservation is still the best definition of our effort. She asked if Bert Moffit, former Williston Town Manager and WVPD board member, could be re-enlisted to help us. Nick stated that municipalities are difficult for the general public to understand our mission and operations. We will also need to plan how to inform the public more completely.

Town Meeting Updates, Land Acquisition Updates, Williston Update and Discussion:

Please see report by Nick on March 17, 2017, of WVPD Activities since Previous Meeting. Land acquisition is moving along. Nick discussed the Burlington Marina with Karen Bates, State of VT Lower Winooski planner, who stated that disbursement of grant from Keurig may assist with that property. After reading the report, Aaron asked for clarification of the term “releasing” regarding the apple trees on the border of Colchester Pond. Nick explained that no new apples were planted; only that vines were removed that were choking them. In staffing issues, the most efficient and thrifty means of mowing is being researched. We will have same number of summer staff as we did last year, because there are no extra vehicles for them to use.

Adjournment: It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to adjourn at 6:38 PM.

Next Meeting: April 18, 2017

Respectfully prepared by,

Rita Dessau, Secretary