



Winooski Valley Park District

Ethan Allen Homestead

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Board of Trustees
Minutes of the Meeting
April 19, 2016
The meeting began 4:35 PM.

Present: Aaron Keech (Burlington), Susan Gilfillan (Colchester), Tom Malinowski (Essex), Dave Crawford (South Burlington), Rita Dessau (Williston), Nick Warner (Executive Director), Sonja Schuyler (Jericho; chairwoman) Lauren Chicote (Program Director).

Guests: Phyllis Drury, Ethan Allen Homestead Museum Board President; Greg Carter, Carl Pfranger, and Steve Mermelstein of the Northern New England Drone User Group.

Acceptance of Minutes: March 2016 minutes were accepted unanimously, with the correction of 'Global Foundries' to 'IBM' as the donor for the education grant under the Conservation Field Day update.

Confirm or Make Changes to Meeting Agenda: With members of the Northern New England Drone User Group (hereby referred to as Drone User Group or User Group) present, the Drone Policy Discussion was moved up in the agenda to be included in the Public Comment Period to allow for discussion on the topic between Board members and the User Group members.

The item EAHM Updates and Discussion with Board President Phyllis Drury was combined with the Financial Report from Ethan Allen Homestead Museum.

All other items were followed as outlined in the agenda, with the Board returning to the Drone Policy Discussion as it shows in the agenda.

Public Comment Period: Members of the Drone User Group stated to the Board their views of the use of drones as it relates to WVPD parks as public, community space, and that the lower field at the Ethan Allen Homestead was an ideal location to fly the devices as it is a large enough open space to minimize the potential impact to other park users and wildlife. The members also gave a brief description of what the User Group does for fly-in events/group meetings and being an outlet to educate new users on the proper use of drone flying and the regulations around the use of drones. The members showed different smaller models of drones typically used during fly-in events, presented documentation on drone use and the impact on wildlife, specifically to birds, and shared information and resources on already established regulations and rules around the use of drones. The Board explained their concerns on the use of drones in WVPD parks for the reasons of potential harassment of wildlife, impact on other park users, and the difficulties of management and enforcement of use in 18 parks. The Board asked for the members' opinion on some of the questions and issues the Board has been addressing while discussing this topic, mainly enforcement of proper use if a regulation or restriction policy is put in place, especially since the WVPD manages 18 parks. The User Group members felt that use would become self-regulating as more people became involved.

The Drone User Group has put in a request with the WVPD to hold an event for International Drone Use Day, for May 7, 2016 at the Ethan Allen Homestead. The Board said they would review the materials that the group presented, continue their discussion on the topic and get back

to the Drone User Group with a decision on the event by the end of the week. The Board thanked and stated their appreciation for the Drone User Group members for their time, presence and the information presented. Members of the Drone User Group expressed they would be happy to continue to conversation with the WVPD and the Board as the WVPD makes a discussion on the use of drones in WVPD parks. The User Group members left the meeting at about 5:30pm.

Financial Report from Ethan Allen Homestead Museum and EAHM Updates and Discussion with Board President Phyllis Drury: Nick gave a summary of updates on progress with the Museum's reorganization and getting ready for the opening season. The EAHM provided a Profit & Loss by Month summary for the Board. Ethan Allen Homestead Museum Board President Phyllis Drury informed the Board about coming events the museum has planned including the May 1 Opening Day Open House, and June 23 Ethan Allen Day. Nick will continue to attend Museum Board meetings and help work in capacity building grants.

Financial Report from WVPD: The WVPD presented the Board with a financial statement. WVPD staff is continuing to work with their bookkeeper on getting Financial Reports into a more user friendly format.

Updates on two Riverfront Properties; Winooski Canoe Launch: Nick Warner gave updates on his continued research and conversations with various stakeholders to evaluate options for the future of the Tomasi Parcel. A motion was made to authorize Nick to explore possible opportunities for the parcel by continuing the conversations with stakeholders and collaborators and to bring them together in discussing the future of the parcel. The motion was accepted unanimously.

Grant through the Davis Foundation has been applied for repairs to the Colchester Pond canoe launch.

Updates and discussion with Park Superintendent, Tim Larned: Updates and information on various projects, including the new entrance sign at the Ethan Allen Homestead being installed, wetland delineation work being planned for Wolcott Family Natural Area, Colchester Pond management plan being implemented and VELCO project being completed, and hiring of the new seasonal maintenance crew were given by Parks Superintendent, Tim Larned.

Drone Policy Discussion: Board member Aaron Keech expressed his concerns allowing use of drones on WVPD lands and presented several articles on their impact to wildlife. Many of the articles countered the articles and information that the User Group presented.

The Board discussed various options including no use of drones, limited access on a trial basis with prior permission granted by WVPD first, limited to only certain areas and times. The Board will review the materials presented at the meeting, continue to research the topic and continue the discussion to develop a long-term policy for use of drones on WVPD lands.

Motion was made to not give permission to the User Group to use the field at the Ethan Allen Homestead for the May 7th International Drone Day event. The board greatly appreciated the time of the User Group members, and the information presented, but at this time need more time to develop a policy around use on WVPD lands. The board hopes to continue the conversation with the User Group as they formulate a policy. Motion was accepted unanimously.

Funding Formula Discussion: update on South Burlington: Tabled to May meeting.

Director's Updates: Deferred to Board member to read on their own time.

Motion to adjourn was made, and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM.

Next Meeting: May 17, 2016 at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully prepared by,

Lauren Chicote
Assistant to the Director

Respectfully submitted by,

Rita Dessau
Secretary