



# Winooski Valley Park District

Ethan Allen Homestead  
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## Board of Trustees

### Minutes of the Meeting

June 21, 2016

The meeting began at 4:30 PM.

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

**Guests:** J Ladd, Burlington Property Solutions; Carl Pfranger Upper New England Modern Drone User Group.

**Absent:** Andrew Bolduc (new Winooski trustee), Lauren Chicote (Programs Director)

**Acceptance of Minutes:** Minutes of April 19, 2016 meeting will be reviewed at July 12 meeting.

**Public Comment Period:** No guests were present at public comment period.

**Financial Report from Ethan Allen Homestead/WVPD:** EAHM total net income Jan 1-June 11, 2016 was \$5,898.90. This represents significantly improved financial status. More donations have been solicited, and there is a new part-time manager, Jillian Casey, who has been quite effective.

WVPD budgets for April and May were reviewed. Nick stated that the end-of-year goal is to roll over up to \$15,000 into capital improvement budget. This year, we are on target with over \$13,300 available for that purpose. The 7600 capital improvement operating expenses report for July 1, 2015-April 30, 2016 required a correction to \$1,190.16.

**Election of Officers to the Board:** The current officers were nominated and voted in to continue serving for the 2016-2017 year:

Sonja Schuyler, Chairperson

Susan Gilfillan, Assistant Chairperson

David Crawford, Treasurer

Rita Dessau, Secretary

**Director's Updates:** Please see *Attachment A: Directors Report* from June 16, 2016 prepared by Nick Warner to Board of Trustees. The board will welcome Andrew Bolduc, who was confirmed as WVPD trustee at the Winooski City Council meeting on June 16.

### Update of Colchester Pond farmhouse renovation plans with J Ladd of Burlington

**Property Solutions:** J Ladd presented the Board a memo dated June 21, 2016 regarding funding the renovations of the Colchester Pond Farmhouse. At least \$200,000 would be needed to

appropriately renovate as proposed. Various strategies were discussed, such as seeking a private partner who would be willing to bear the cost of renovating. Education and outreach to the community would be required. Nick stated that the initial management plan needed to be upgraded, as it is now 13 years old. The WVPD has succeeded in guarding the farmhouse from destruction with the successful use of caretaker housing, but the original idea of having it as a visitor center is not now a practical goal. The primary issue at Colchester Pond now is episodic overcrowding of the parking lot, even more than need to renovate the farmhouse. Susan Gilfillan moved to authorize Nick to pursue funding for long-term planning of the Colchester Pond site. This was seconded and passed unanimously by the board.

**WVPD Drone Policy and proposal from Upper New England Modern Drone User Group:**

Carl Pfranger from the Drone Users group attended, to discuss their proposed Winooski Valley Park District R/C Aircraft Rules, which the board had received in spring 2016. The Drone User Group has about 150 members currently. FAA requires any drone user with a drone weighing over 250 grams to register with the FAA. The Burlington Airport requires that drone flying 1-5 miles from the airport be done no higher than 200 feet above land. Nick stated that drone use on public land is still a gray area legally. While the FAA has authority of use of airspace, there is no current grant of authority to municipalities to regulate use of land for drones. Aaron Keech stated that the Park District property rights are the main concern. Dave Crawford asked if there might be better alternative sites to the WVPD for drone use. Susan Gilfillan asked to defer the opinion of the WVPD Board until the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) opinion on drone use can be discovered. David Crawford moved to have the Executive Director research the following question, particularly seeking an opinion from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns: "Does the WVPD have jurisdiction under local, state, and/or federal law to regulate the launching and landing of UAV's on WVPD properties?" The board seconded and passed the motion. David Crawford also moved that Executive Director research whether the WVPD charter makes any allowance for drone-flying type of activity, and if drone-flying would affect our lawsuit insurance needs. This motion was also seconded and passed. Susan Gilfillan thanked Carl Pfranger on behalf of the board, for his responsible and respectful discussion of the issue.

**South Burlington Contract Proposal and Regional Service Contract:** Nick Warner explained that Kevin Dorn of the City of South Burlington has proposed to have the WVPD work on a fee-for-service basis to do general maintenance of natural areas in parks such as Red Rocks and Wheeler. South Burlington passed a 1.2 million dollar bond to improve maintenance of their city's natural areas in parks within 3 years, but it has no current personnel for this job. Nick Warner stated that if we took on this type of work, it would need to grow slowly and flexibly, with caution that the WVPD primary mission not be damaged. It would not affect the funding formula, although Sonja Schuyler cautioned that in the past, our provision of trail maintenance to the town of Williston resulted in a misunderstanding of our use of their contribution. Williston wanted the WVPD to do contracted services specific for the town of Williston, equal to their portion of WVPD funding. Susan Gilfillan also cautioned that WVPD needs to be certain that there are no current South Burlington employees that are responsible for doing the work that would then be displaced by personnel WVPD would hire. David Crawford stated that there currently no other personnel or companies that were asked to do this work. Susan Gilfillan stated that in a subcontracting situation, there could be problems with having contractors as our employees. For example, our FICA cost could increase. Aaron Keech was concerned about our branding, since we would be putting up signs disclosing our participation in the trail development and maintenance. The other aspects of the parks might not support our

standards. However, David Crawford has applied to be on the South Burlington Natural Resources Committee, and will hopefully have influence on this issue. Susan Gilfillan suggested that branding not be done unless it is clear that the enforcement of the park regulations is secure. Nick Warner said a contract administrator/bookkeeper may have to be hired for this project. **Sonja Schuyler requested that the board review South Burlington's proposal and send their questions/comments to Nick Warner prior to the next meeting.** Nick stated that Kevin Dorn would be asked to come to the next WVPD Board meeting, to further discuss this proposal.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday July 12, 2016 at Ethan Allen Homestead at 4:30 PM (moved from July 19 because several board members will not be present)

Respectfully submitted by:

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Rita Dessau, Secretary

## Attachment A: Directors Report



# Winooski Valley Park District



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**TO: Board of Trustees**  
**FROM: Nick Warner**  
**RE: WVPD activities since previous meeting** (April 18, 2016)  
**DATE: June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

The Board of Trustees will meet on **Tuesday, June 21st at 4:30pm** in the Founders Tavern in the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum and Education Center at Ethan Allen Homestead. Please let me know if you will be unable to attend.

### EAHM Updates

Working closely with EAHM Board President Phyllis Drury, John Hossley and other Board members, there has been significant progress in facility cleanup, basic maintenance, and planning for the future. The facility and grounds are in excellent shape. Jillian Casey, EAHM's new half-time manager, is assisting with the grant applications. In the fall, grants to the VT SHPO will seek funds for facility upgrades.

### DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

#### Winooski Canoe Launch

Tim and Nick have been working with Ray Coffey and Ken Nolan at Burlington Electric, and a plan has evolved for both access sites. In the short term, the removal of existing steps at the Millyard site is a priority for the STEP Program (see below).

#### Winooski STEP Program

Tim and Nick have been working with Ethan Hausman, Winooski Recreation and Parks Director, on a STEP (Summer Teen Employment Program) where Tim will help supervise 2 Americorps and up to 4 Youth Crew members on various projects in Winooski over 8 weeks (June 13-Aug 5).

#### Updates on Riverfront Properties

*Howe Farm/Tomasi:* I spoke again with the Tomasi family: Tracy Tomasi, Teresa's daughter, called to discuss the parcel. I updated her on my various conversations and ideas for permanently conserving the parcel. She will be discussing this with her family.

*Rivers End Marina:* The 3090 North Ave./Rivers End Marina property is up for sale. It was originally listed at \$750k, lowered to \$500k. This 2.4 acre riverfront parcel is 100% floodplain, and is adjacent to Derway Island Natural Area. It has a 34-slip marina in a basin that has issues with siltation: an unpermitted dredging project a few years ago kept the basin open. Nick met with Chris Boget from the Lake Champlain Land Trust (LCLT) and former WVPD Trustee John Ewing regarding the property. LCLT has an interest in working on an acquisition; however there are many barriers (cost and timing). It was agreed that the site has strong potential for

public boating access, and Chris and Nick will meet with Mike Wichrowski who runs the State Boating Access program about the possibility of state involvement.

### SD Ireland

Developer completing environmental assessment, this summer we will work with him on the property transfer to WVPD.

### Septic/Burlington Telecom

Septic permit amendment approval has been received, and recorded in City Records. This means several things: Burlington Forest Pre-School can operate year-round; we can contemplate renovations that increase the capacity of the EAHM and WVPD offices; the capacity of our three onsite systems are full clarified in state law and in our property records.

Burlington Telecom has indicated that the work order has been issued for Burlington Electric to prepare poles up the hill for the new wires: we should have service within a few weeks.

### Brownell Mountain/Williston

Melinda Scott, Williston's Environmental Planner, has approached an engineer to look at specific site issues and develop permit drawings. Another project (Mud Pond parking lot) must be resolved before the Conservation Board releases funds for Brownell. A parking lot site has been established, Tim and Nick will continue to work with Williston on development.

### End of Fiscal Year Expenditures

We are entering the end of FY16 and are planning the following large expenditures:

- Burlington Telecom: \$4,000 for installation of service (using capital funds)
- Wetland delineation at WFNA: \$3,500 (VHB was successful bidder)
- Macrae Parking Lot repair: \$2,000
- WFNA Parking lot construction: \$2,000 (matching funds for Trails Program grant)

### **Parks Superintendent Update:**

All parking areas are open for the season. Parks are looking good, flooding damage this year was minimal. We hired 2 new Crew Members for the upcoming season, they both started in early May and have been enjoying getting acquainted with the parks.

The bridge washout at Macrae was repaired. Erik's Excavating of Colchester was contracted for this job. Cost to repair \$2200-\$2500. We have received many compliments from park users. In addition to repairing the washout, more gravel was added to improve the bridge approaches and the road was graded. Macrae is a very popular spring fishing area so everyone is happy to have access restored.

Crew worked with Remy and volunteers from Burlington High School and Essex Middle School removing invasive plants at Colchester Pond and EAH. Crew has been busy mowing parks and clearing trails.

Set up and helped make sure Conservation Field Day ran smoothly.

Winooski STEP Project begins 6/13. The first project is to remove the old/dangerous stairs at Millyard. Tim is working with Winooski Recreation and Parks Manager Ethan Hausman and

several Americorps to come up with some other projects for the crew to tackle over the 8 week program.

NRCS meeting was held at Colchester Pond on 5/19. Dave Adams with VT Fish and Wildlife is putting a plan together that should be ready by the end of the month that WVPD will review with Forester Allan Thompson and pick a few projects to proceed with. Our current thought is to work on the recommended shrubland habitat management section and invasive plant management. Due to the known golden and blue winged warblers that have been seen there, it sounds like our project will be ranked very highly and some sections will receive nearly total funding.

A large hazard tree was removed from the side of the bike path at Delta Park, DJ's Tree Removal was contracted for \$900.

James Dionne, of Jericho, is considering Old Mill Park as the location of his Eagle Scout Project. Tim will be meeting with him on 6/8. The idea we were starting with was to have him research and build bird, bat and owl houses to install throughout the park.

Organizing a Youth Build Service Day for Williston at Mud Pond on 6/17. Will be repairing approximately 200' of bog bridges. Melinda Scott, Town of Williston's Conservation Planner, and Daniel Kelly, their Summer Trails Intern will be assisting. Melinda has contacted the Williston Observer about the project and hopes to have them out that day.

Wolcott Family Natural Area - VHB, the Environmental Consultants we selected to do the Wetland Delineation were onsite 5/31 and 6/1. Tim is waiting for the map and summary of what they found. Timetable for VYCC work to begin this summer is getting tight, so a revised goal of having the parking area developed this season with trail work to follow next year may be more feasible.

The damaged dock was removed from Colchester Pond. 40' of puncheon was replaced at the Boat Launching area.

New Entrance sign installed at EAH.

Colchester Pond- talked with the town to have signage re-installed clarifying "No Parking" along the curve before the Colchester Pond entrance. A neighbor, Wilder Wheelock III, had asked about placing some boulders there. The town did not want boulders as they could pose a safety hazard in the ROW. Parks Crew replaced 40' of puncheon leading to the Boat Access area at the edge of the Pond.

Parks Crew worked with many partners in May including:

- Gabe Ingman, a student we have been working with from Champlain College, organized a student work day at EAH where we cleaned up our wood pile and some of the garden beds around the Homestead.
- Youth Build, 3 teachers and 6 students worked with the WVPD Crew at Salmon Hole. We raked the green areas, mulched the front gardens and made some repairs to trail structures.
- On Top (Burlington High School Group) – WVPD Crew worked with Remy and group of students clearing invasive plants from along Picnic Shelter Rd at EAH.

- Green Up Day – WVPD employees visited many parks on Green Up Day including Salmon Hole, Macrae, Delta and Winooski Gorge. A camp site at Salmon Hole was removed. Volunteers also helped pick up litter at Essex Overlook, Woodside, Muddy Brook and Old Mill.

### **Programs Director Update/AmeriCorps Update:**

#### **Conservation Field Day**

Conservation Field Day was a huge success thanks to the WVPD Crew, Tim, Nick and Remy – could not have happened without their help and support. Also, thank you to Rita and Tom for taking some wonderful pictures of all the workshops and activities happening throughout the day! Just under 300 5<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in 28 workshops. We received very positive feedback from teachers, students and workshop leaders. Everyone had a great time!

#### **S.O.L.E. Camp**

Staff training and orientation will be held next week. We have hired one camp counselor that will work with Remy to lead the campers in activities each week. We are able to hold all eight weeks of camp, with enrollment being very high in the 6-9 year old age group. We are working with several partners including UVM Field Naturalist Program and the UVM Watershed Alliance to lead special programs on designated topics throughout the summer. Camp starts June 27<sup>th</sup>! It's going to be a great summer!

#### **AmeriCorps**

The WVPD was allotted an AmeriCorps member for the upcoming 2016-2017 program year through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps Program. Remy has decided to do another term of service with the WVPD and we are thrilled to have him on board for another year!

#### **Afterschool and Education Programs Update**

Lauren and Remy will be focusing on redesigning and revising the WVPD's education program offerings for schools this upcoming year, and will be working with Jillian from the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum to design joint program offerings that incorporate both history and science curriculum into one field trip. Lauren and Remy will also be reaching out to more afterschool programs to offer programming to for next school year. This year's pilot after school programs with Jericho Elementary School/YMCA, Burlington Kids and Colchester A.C.E. Program were a big success and plans are being made to continue working with these programs next year.

### **Events:**

June 23<sup>rd</sup>: first annual "Ethan Allen Day" at the EAHM 5-7 PM

July 4: Citizenship Ceremony at the Ethan Allen Homestead

July 6: Army Jazz Band Performance at the Ethan Allen Homestead