

## BOYCE HILL TOWN FOREST STEERING COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

MAY 05, 2021

**PRESENT:** Corrie Miller, Chuck Martel, Liza Walker, Sally Dwyer, Pete Colgan, Karrie Thomas, Woody Dugan, and Lisa Koitzsch

1. Chuck made a motion to approve the minutes from April 21, 2021. Karrie seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. Public Input – There was no public input.
3. Goals for today's meeting:
  - a. Debrief from first public forum.
  - b. Review details for second forum.
  - c. Survey promotion.
4. Public Forum #1 Debrief – “Thorns and Roses”:
  - a. 48 people attended forum, but likely more as some attendees shared computers.
  - b. Over 100 people registered – seems a typical phenomenon re: Zoom forums that more people register for events than attend events. There were a couple of conflicting events during this time, including a Presidential address.
  - c. We added approximately 40 names to the Boyce Hill mailing list on Mail Chimp from people who signed up through registration.
  - d. Also added names to stewardship and fundraising spreadsheets.
  - e. One person did not realize she was being recorded and suggested this be made clear at the beginning of each session. One idea would be to put this info in the chat.
  - f. Woody asked how many YouTube hits there were from the MRVTV taping. Pete said there had been 53 views.
  - g. Positive feedback from Fayston residents about forum bringing the community together and providing good information.
  - h. Karrie gave Pete kudos for the tone and content of his introduction. All echoed the same sentiments and agreed that Pete should repeat the same intro for the next forums.
  - i. All thanked Liza for providing information on the easement and the VLT process.
  - j. Ethan Tapper was able to impart a lot of important information in a short amount of time.
  - k. Peter Forbes, as facilitator, provided a safe and calm environment for people to express their views.
  - l. Surprise expressed that nobody had questions for Ethan or Liza.
  - m. One person commented that the wait in the beginning was uncomfortable, but SC agreed that it was only a few minutes and given the number of people participating, this was acceptable.
  - n. Consider Peter Forbes for facilitation of last forum.
  - o. This I Believe – everyone liked this segment. It was effective, comforting, and helped break the ice.
  - p. Thank you cards to the presenters of the first forum.
5. Public Forum #2 (Natural Resources) Plans
  - a. Presenters: Pete Colgan, Steering Committee intro; Grace Glynn, Boyce Hill Ecological Assessment/NRI; Jenna Koloski, VT Council on Rural Development, Facilitator.
  - b. Will email Zoom link to all the people who registered for the first forum, as well as any new registrants.
  - c. Will repeat the SC introduction and add information about the fact that we are recording.

- d. Discussion about whether to include a “This I Believe” session. May not be as valuable in this session. Hope that this session elicits questions about the specifics of the NRI and the property.
- e. Need to have a meeting very soon with facilitators and Grace Glynn. Lisa is meeting with Grace on Monday and will reach out to the facilitators to set up a meeting with SC and Grace.
- f. Part of Ecological Assessment/Natural Resources Inventory contract was a presentation to the public on findings. Inventory was conducted late fall of 2020 and provided information on conditions of the property at that point in time.
- g. Anticipate more response to this presentation topic than the last so important to provide a factual presentation that doesn’t assume a particular set of values. Challenge is that natural resource management is complicated and that there is more to the story than meets the eye. SC job is to provide facts and to listen.
- h. We should provide a link to the NRI in the announcement for the workshop.
- i. Discussion on beliefs/opinions vs. facts. How to give Grace power to be the expert, but also the community power to express their view.
- j. Suggestion that Lisa or Corrie provide introduction to Grace and the NRI to enhance credibility. Discussion on how much the SC can interject with relevant expertise and, whether we should.
- k. What do we want to hear from the public on this topic? Chuck said he would like to hear anything the public says, even if there is some misinformation out there.
- l. Ask people to consider what they don’t know and to ask questions about this. If there are parts of the NRI or the survey that have created concerns or questions, this is a time for the community to have a direct conversation with an expert.
- m. Need to respond to misconceptions and provide replies to these – part of the scientific conversation we will face in developing the management plan.
- n. Perhaps we need to provide additional expertise to help answer some of the ecological questions that will come up, rather than put it all on Grace’s shoulders. The facilitation of this will be critical.
- o. Liza suggested that it is important to let the attendees know that we are all learning and that this night is about curiosity – about asking questions and getting information.
- p. Chuck suggested that a few well-placed words in the introduction could help people focus on Natural Resources and sharing facts.
- q. Pete: people do not make decisions based on facts, they make decisions based on emotion. We can create an emotional connection for people.
- r. Karrie stated the ultimate message is that we can improve the natural resources without losing everything people love about the property. It won’t be exactly how it is now, but the feeling that people get on the property should remain in some way. Can we allay people’s fears?
- s. Corrie: This property is a challenge of change for people. It will not be the same for everyone and that will be hard. If you have questions and you have curiosity, it will be nice to provide an answer. People are inclined to look for a simple explanation to things, but things in the natural world are not simple. It is important to tell deeper more complex stories.
- t. Suggestion that Grace provide some definitions: biodiversity, richness, connected forest block, perspective on how natural world is viewed by ecologists. Stay away from the word ‘facts’ as that is alienating for some. Benefits of an altered condition – example: soils- are they being lost, how are they being lost, and what is the benefit of rebuilding healthy soil conditions.
- u. Lisa: This is an important session to learn about what happens when natural resources are restored and managed. This doesn’t mean that the SC is not listening to input about

- recreation and that there won't be a balance. It is just an opportunity for education and understanding.
- v. Forum: educational component and sharing of opinions. This workshop focuses on natural resources but ok for people to express visions about other aspects as well.
  - w. Potentially have a series of relevant guided questions for this session. Lisa and Corrie will work on this and distribute a draft to SC via email. Review input we have received so far and prepare Grace for a suite of questions the SC would like to see answered – focused on major topics people have communicated to us about. This would be appropriate right after Grace's presentation and before we open it up for general questions. We can also invite people with more expertise to weigh in on some of the questions the public might have.
  - x. During the public visioning portion of the workshop, we could also provide some guiding statements: What do people think about xxxx? This will depend on the content of Grace's talk.
  - y. Pete will draft a press release for the workshop to submit to the Valley Reporter. All agreed to post on FPF, BHTF mailing list, Town listserv a week before the event. Should we post the graphic in the Valley Reporter? The event is already in the VR calendar.
6. Public Forum #3 (Recreation) Plans
- a. Karrie and Woody will be spearheading the organization of this event on June 9<sup>th</sup>.
7. Public Survey
- a. How many characters are there in the comment sections? It varies between questions – people can also write emails/letters with additional input if there is not enough room.
  - b. Discussion regarding letter received by Ben and Wendy Bridgewater.
  - c. Pete will draft a press release for the survey. Discussion on best time to announce the survey.
  - d. Have received 23 responses so far!
  - e. No hard date for ending of survey yet – keep it open for the moment. Announce final date when we need to get final feedback.
  - f. Pete thanked Woody for his final input on the survey.
8. Writing the Management Plan
- a. VLT has offered to synthesize the reports we have received as a start to drafting the management plan. VLT will also provide feedback on the draft document.
  - b. All agreed it would be important to hire a consultant to write the management plan. The SC would guide what decisions are made but the consultant would act as project leader and facilitator.
  - c. Chuck will contact Liza and Caitlin to see if they have any recommendations for a consultant, and Karrie will contact Becca Washburn for her recommendations.
  - d. Important to move the process forward soon so that the consultant can observe the public process as it is unfolding.
  - e. We will need to draft an RFP for this work.
  - f. Pete – Framework: High level objectives, strategies to accomplish objectives, and tactics to reach objectives. As we listen through this process, SC should think about objectives and starting points.
  - g. BHTF name could be changed if the public wants.
  - h. Sally provided the correct spelling of Wrisley 😊

**Next Meeting – Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**

## TASK LIST

### All:

- Review outline for next workshop.
- Review guiding questions for next workshop.
- Begin to think about management plan objectives, strategies, and tactics.
- Sign thank you notes to presenters when ready.

### Caitlin:

### Chuck:

- Contact Liza and Caitlin re: suggestions for a consultant to help guide the writing of the management plan.

### Corrie:

- Update graphic for next workshop.
- Work on Nat Resources workshop outline (Corrie/Pete)
- Develop guiding questions for workshop (Lisa)

### Karrie:

- Ask Becca Washburn for consultant recommendations for the writing of the management plan.

### Liza:

### Lisa:

- Post survey link and workshop announcement on Town website.
- Meet with Grace to review presentation details.
- Develop guiding questions for workshop (Corrie)
- Send link to SC re: timeline of workshop notices.
- Email to Jenna and Jon re: facilitation details for next workshop.
- Transfer names of people wanting to volunteer or donate to spreadsheets.
- Work on Nat Resources workshop outline (Corrie/Pete)
- Email Zoom link to all participants via Mail Chimp
- Workshop announcement posting via BHTF list and Fayston Listserv.
- Thank you notes to the presenters of first forum – facilitate signing by other SC members.
- Record minutes for Steering Committee meetings and post to Town website.

### Pete:

- Draft press releases for survey and for next workshop.
- Send press release to Valley Reporter/post on FPF.
- Prepare for SC intro to workshop.
- Work on Nat Resources workshop outline (Corrie/Pete)
- Develop agenda for May 25, 2021 meeting by 5/21/21.

### Sally:

- Incorporate any public input received outside of survey into spreadsheet.

### Woody:

- Install No Fires signs.