

BOYCE HILL TOWN FOREST STEERING COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
MAY 25, 2021

Present: Pete Colgan, Chuck Martel, Sally Dwyer, Liza Walker, and Lisa Koitzsch.

1. Chuck moved to approve the minutes from May 5, 2021, Sally seconded. No further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. Public Input – no members of the public were present.
3. Goals for today's meeting
 - a. Forum 2 – Debrief
 - b. Forum 3 – Plans
 - c. Forum 4 – Ideas
 - d. Management Plan – next steps
 - e. Portalets, speed, and water testing discussions
4. Public Forum #2 Debrief
 - a. All agreed that the presentations for the Natural Resources Public Forum were informative and interesting, and that the facilitator did a great job. Lisa thought perhaps the speakers could have provided a little more detail when answering a few of the questions that were posed.
 - b. Grace's explanation of habitat complexity and "messiness" resonated with SC members.
 - c. Pete and Chuck reported on feedback about the presentation from Fayston resident, Don Simonini.
 - d. There was some discussion about feedback from a couple of people regarding concerns that a conservation 'agenda' for the property was being promoted. Lisa expressed some frustration with this perception and other SC members agreed that finding a balance was important. There was a brief discussion about management zones.
 - e. Liza suggested it would be interesting to capture where people are using the property – perhaps with trail counters or by asking people to draw on a map – as it seems that there are certain areas that receive much higher use than others.
 - f. Chuck mentioned that the SC needs to consider Christina Castegren's vision for the property but also to abide by VLT's Conservation Easement. Liza added that the property was not gifted so that it would stay exactly as it was, and that it still has value if there are changes made. It would be important to keep the 'wow' factor of the vistas present while making some ecological reparations, such as riparian restoration.
 - g. Chuck said it was important to define the objectives for the property to develop a management plan. Pete added there is some expertise required to set those objectives in place.
 - h. All agreed the current format for the forums was working and that we did not need to make any changes.
 - i. Lisa summarized the public input for the Natural Resources forum on Google Drive.
5. On-Line Survey
 - a. To date, there have been 59 on-line survey responses. Discussion re: publicizing the survey on FPF, listserv, etc. Liza suggested a raffle to get people to participate and perhaps putting a sign up at the property asking people to fill out the survey. Pete said we could perhaps print out some paper copies of the survey to have available at the Town Office. Lisa suggested placing an ad in the Valley Reporter or adding a QR code to a sign at the property.
 - b. In a preliminary review of results, the least desired activities are camping, campfires, and

hunting. Very few people support horseback riding and mountain biking so far.

6. Public Forum #3 (Recreation) Plans
 - a. Karrie and Woody are working on developing the next forum. Becca Washburn will be the speaker and Jon Copans of the VT Center for Rural Development will be the facilitator. No report as neither were at the meeting.
 - b. There was some discussion re: potential topics to be covered. Balancing recreational demands, managing interactions between different types of users, learning how the State handles these issues, etc.
 - c. There may be a little more weight on the public input conversation as opposed to presentation this time since there is only one presenter.
 - d. Lisa will contact Woody and Karrie about status of forum and will help organize if necessary.
7. Public Forum #4 – Ideas?
 - a. Jam Board? Allow people to point at areas of significance, where they like to see views, where they would like to recreate, etc., as was presented at the Waitsfield Scrag Forest meeting earlier this year.
 - b. This forum could be held via Zoom or in person at the site. Might be more organized as a zoom meeting. Could hold a few walks, cultural resource talk, etc. outside in addition to the forum.
 - c. Vermont Recreational Planning Toolkit is a good resource for ideas on what to include in this last forum.
 - d. Pete suggested we hold off on another public visioning forum, and instead, wait for the SC to determine some of its management planning objectives, and then present those to the public as a 4th forum.
 - e. Chuck suggested the SC provide a summary of public opinion before moving forward with the management plan objectives.
 - f. Sally thought it would be helpful to have a map that would add some of the other features on the property that have not been included on maps so far. Such as apple trees, stone walls, etc. In addition, it would be helpful to see visually on a map how things such as different sized buffers on waterways and vernal pools would look (Pete shared Grace's map that highlighted this).
 - g. Liza added that giving people a visual view of potential management objectives might be a helpful complimentary way to help people understand them better – even adapting the existing adaptive map to include some of the management ideas and what this would look like. Chuck agreed that it might allay people's concerns re: perceived limitations to their 'favorite' places.
 - h. Fourth forum could be billed as a summary of public input and potential implications and strategies.
 - i. Liza suggested that we could use the summer to have a few field walks (take a zoom break!) for the public on the property, and then reconvene at the end of the summer for the 4th forum to summarize what we have heard and what the broad objectives might be. This would be a way of checking in with the public before moving forward with specifics.
 - j. If we do public walks, Lisa suggested handing out paper copies of the survey for people to take home – or at least provide a link to the survey.
 - k. All agreed to hold off on Forum #4 until we developed some of the preliminary management objectives.
8. Writing the Management Plan
 - a. Liza reviewed the names of consultants Caitlin provided earlier this month. She asked the SC if this was a person we would want to work with us to develop the plan, or did we want to hand our information off to someone to synthesize. Chuck said it would be someone who could sit with SC to ask questions and strategies and then summarize the results.

- b. An RFP will need to be drafted. Liza suggested referring to the Waitsfield CC re: RFP for Scrag and said she would ask some of her colleagues if they had suggestions of any other examples we could use. Lisa suggested reaching out to Ethan Tapper to see if he knew of any towns that might have gone through the RFP process for their management plan.
- c. By the next SC meeting, we should have gathered examples of other RFPs and potentially begun to draft our own RFP. Liza offered to research other Town Forests and what process they used.
- d. Sally suggested doing a survey of individual SC members to get a sense of what we want at this point, now that we have listened and learned from the experts and the public. A physical map would be helpful to determine what each of us might want to see happen on the property.
- e. Pete stated that the abutter perspective is important. Sally agreed that there will be more and more people using the land, and that this might cause some issues in the future.
- f. Lisa said it was important for the SC to look towards the long-term future of the property and not just the immediate needs/wants of today.
- g. Liza agreed that you might not be able to meet everyone's needs just for the simple purpose of carrying capacity for the next half dozen years until trends are determined.

9. Infrastructure discussion

- a. Portalets – feedback from last forum, should we consider installing one? Discussion of the current project at Lareau Park as a possible example. Agreement to wait and see what happens with the portalets in Waitsfield. If we do install one, they should be vandal-proof. Liza said the easement allows structures related to helping the Town manage the property. Need to do more research before spending money to install something at Boyce. Lisa suggested installing a portalet for a few months over the summer as an experiment. Chuck added that if we don't do something, we may be hearing from more people. Liza suggested installing an ADA portalet might be a better option.
- b. Dog waste bags – should we consider installing them? Lisa suggested we should be more stringent about not having dogs off leash and requiring people to pick up after them.
- c. Discussion of the StewardMRV project and Liza provided some background on the project: intern, more frequent pick-ups, monitoring of sites, etc.
- d. Lisa said we should post the boundaries of the property as soon as it is feasible (apple tree? mountain outline?). Potentially also update the private property signs so that the wording is stronger. Pete commented that the current signage at the entrance to the property should be updated.
- e. Water testing – At the last forum, members of the public expressed concern about water quality. Lisa said Friends of the Mad River is not testing for e-coli this summer and that it might be expensive for the Town to test the pond. Sally thought it would be important to do something to allay public concerns.
- f. Trash pick-up – Perhaps we can develop a rotation of volunteers to pick up trash on the property. Should we consider a trash container up there? If not, then where do we take the trash once it is picked up?

10. Next Meeting - June 16, 2021, 7:00 PM.

TASK LIST

All:

- Review outline for next workshop.
- Begin to think about management plan objectives, strategies, and tactics that we might present to the public at a 4th forum.
- Come up with ideas on building out the interactive map.
- Determine who will work on providing a summary of public input that could be presented at a 4th forum.
- Come up with ideas to create better signage at the property entrance.
- Organize a meeting at the property to determine location for a possible portalet.

Caitlin:

Chuck:

- Work with Liza re: resources to help develop RFP for consultant on management plan.
- Research information re: trash and how the Town might handle this.

Corrie:

- Determine if testing the pond for e-coli or other bacteria is feasible and if so, how this could happen?

Karrie:

- Work with Woody, Pete and Lisa to organize Recreation Forum.
- Coordinate with Becca re: presentation and Jon Copans re: facilitation for next forum.
- Ask Becca Washburn for consultant recommendations for the writing of the management plan.

Liza:

- Provide some assistance with developing RFP for consultant to help with writing management plan – contact Phil Huffman.
- Catalog other Town Forests to see what consultants they used and what process they went through.

Lisa:

- Work with Karrie, Pete, and Woody to organize Recreation Forum.
- Recreation Forum announcement posting via BHTF list and Fayston Listserv.
- Email Zoom link for Forum #3 to all participants via Mail Chimp
- Work with Woody to begin developing a boundary marker for property.
- Help Liza and Chuck research examples of RFPs and how consultants have been used to develop management plans. Create a document on Google Drive for draft RFP.
- Create Google drive document to begin summarizing public input to date and another to begin laying out management objectives.
- Meet with Sally to review upper boundary of property.
- Email Ross Saxton about portalets.
- Record minutes for Steering Committee meetings and post to Town website.

Pete:

- Send Recreation Forum press release to Valley Reporter/post on FPF.
- Send Survey press release to Valley Reporter/post on FPF – date?

- Develop agenda for June 16, 2021, meeting by 6/12/21.

Sally:

- Incorporate any public input received outside of survey into spreadsheet.
- Meet with Lisa to review upper boundary of property.
- Contact Green Mountain Club to ask how they deal with portalets/privys.

Woody:

- Work with Karrie, Pete and Lisa to organize Recreation Forum.
- Work with Lisa and others to develop a boundary marker like the one used at Chase Brook Town Forest (mink on yellow diamond).
- Brainstorm ways to develop a “trash” team from our list of stewardship volunteers (with Lisa).