



# TOWN OF RANDOLPH, VERMONT

**Tuesday, January 04, 2022 at 6:00pm**  
**Randolph Conservation Commission**  
**Meeting via Zoom**

Attendees: Brendan Barden (Chair), Ian Blackmer, Jenny Davis, Harrison Drapo, Chandler Engel, Zoe Newmarco, Jessamyn West, Rachel Westbrook

Absent: Tom Harty

Guest/Selectboard Liaison: Perry Armstrong

1. Call to Order at 6:03
2. Approval of December minutes.  
Chandler and Brendan had offered corrections via email (spelling of Trevor's last name and comment about the possibility of a shelter being made for the town at the old reservoir site) which Jenny fixed. Motion to approve by Jessamyn/Rachel, 7-0-1 (Harrison abstained).
3. Discuss next steps for formalizing an agreement with Ridgeline Outdoor Collective about trail maintenance and use.  
There was a written agreement that Zac had forwarded to us in a rush to get a grant for trail work. We okayed the trail work but didn't finalize the agreement. We can use that document from Ridgeline and another sample from the Vermont Forest, Parks, and Rec Department (FPR) as a starting point to create a formal agreement. Brendan has spoken about this with Trevor, who felt that along with the RCC, the Selectboard and the town legal counsel should review any kind of document. Jessamyn asked if it's the RCC's job to start this, or is it Ridgeline's? Do we want to start by sending two drafts (Ridgeline's and FPR's) around? We can start a discussion via email. Jessamyn suggested putting them in Google Docs. Jenny asked what areas we're talking about- Sayward only or also Ellis? Brendan pointed out that this agreement is between the town and Ridgeline, not the RCC and Ridgeline. The agreement is intended to cover areas which the RCC oversees where Ridgeline would maintain trails. Jessamyn asked if we know when Ridgeline is going to hear about that grant. Brendan will ask Sean Curran. Brendan will send an email to us with the documents.
4. Discuss issues related to Farr's Hill ski tow development and proposed use of Town land (Ellis).  
Perry came to the meeting to tell us what he has in mind. His goal is to create a community ski hill. He wants it to be especially geared towards little kids learning to ski or snowboard. He has acquired a T-bar and handle-tows. His first concern is where to put the t-bar tow. He had an engineer come look at the space, and he said the end (i.e. the drive unit) should be sitting about 60 feet over the property line towards the north. Situating it thus would be best for unloading. Perry is wondering if they can get a ROW or easement from the town? Brendan said that this proposal needs to be written up and to go through a review process. Perry would like this done over the winter and to have it in place by

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June. There will need to be concrete towers for a pier to sit on. Perry said there is also the question of where the power will come from. At first, he was planning on generators. Now, he is wondering if they can access the 3 phase power that'll be running to the reservoir and pumps. He'd need an easement to put a trench in to bring power to where he needs it. He's not sure exactly where the power supply is going to be routed. He thought it would be parallel to the road, but he saw stakes elsewhere. Jenny said she'd like to see a map of where he's talking about. Jessamyn asked if there would need to be parking available for this endeavor on the conservation land. Also, will there actually be a skiing area on the conservation land, or is it just the towers that need to be there? Perry did not bring a map. He described the location as "from where the bird box used to be over a hundred feet to the north." Only the covered drive unit would be on easement property near the spot between the bird box and the bike trail. He said he doesn't need to put a parking area up there. He can provide a sketch as to where the drive unit needs to be. The drive unit needs three piers in a group with another point with a counterweight to keep tension on the rope.

Brendan had spoken to Donna at the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) about the water project and the community ski hill plan. After that conversation, Brendan sent an email to Trevor requesting that he send whatever engineering plans he had so far for the project to Donna. Brendan also asked him for responses to questions Donna had regarding the ski hill plan which would need to be included in the proposal in order for the VLT to give approval. Trevor replied to Donna and Brendan, and Brendan forwarded that communication to the RCC members just before this meeting. Most members did not get a chance to read it yet. Brendan is sending these emails with the details for inclusion to Perry. We would like to see a map and the answers to the questions posed by Trevor and Donna. Perry expressed that he wants this to be a non-profit community project but won't turn it over until it's sustainable.

Brendan asked Perry for his thoughts about the beginner hill. Perry: on the west side of Reservoir Road, there's a slope with a bowl that would lend itself well for another rope tow (if not on the east side). It would be used more as a beginner's area. Two questions: could they do snow making? Could there be additional parking? The group talked about the ski hill project in terms of Phase 1 (just the initial rope tow as mentioned above) and phase 2 (the beginner's area); perhaps we don't need to discuss phase 2 at this point? Brendan pointed out that we might want to get at least the general scope of the phase 2 proposal out there sooner rather than later so it can be in the management plan we're trying to create. Brendan: if the management plan doesn't contemplate that use (phase 2), it might be harder to make that happen than if we'd visited it and looked at it up front. BB encouraged breaking it down in the proposal such that if one part was objectionable (e.g. snowmaking), the whole thing wouldn't be shot down. The field contains the well and needs to be in compliance with source protection. Perry will delineate his plan in writing. Emily remarked that it feels better knowing that VLT is aware of and comfortable with this idea. Ian noted that snowmaking and generators make a lot of noise which area residents might find objectionable. Emily commented that noise would affect not just human neighbors but wildlife in wintering habitat. We will continue the discussion when we have a written proposal. Rachel brought up that we may need to consider a landowner agreement. Brendan said that Trevor mentioned that there would need to be a formal lease as well as an MOU outlining other details that would need to be put in place.

## 5. Ellis Management Plan

- a. Discuss updates if anyone has heard anything about Town well/reservoir plans.

Trevor forwarded the partial Ellis engineering plan to Donna at VLT so she can write up an approval memo or come back with questions or concerns. Donna wants to make it clear that if plans change, VLT needs to be updated so they can be in the loop and aware. Brendan was concerned about the carve-out for the reservoir, but it doesn't sound like that will be an issue. The new wells and reservoir would be on protected land. Brendan talked to her about the approach of doing a homegrown, simple management plan in-house, and she thought that sounded perfect. She thinks we have the right idea of not making the plan prescriptive but rather setting boundaries on what are and are not acceptable uses. This is in addition to including the basic components of what's on the property to conserve, etc., etc.

- b. Revisit discussion about getting community input for consideration in the plan. Emily said that she had offered to do that and will look into that so we can have a discussion about it at the next meeting. Jessamyn said she will help scheme ways to involve the community. Zoe offers to help with this aspect, as well.

Brendan would like to make some progress soon on writing the plan. Chandler recommended sending out an outline that we can plug things into. Jessamyn will send a link to all the documents for the plan that we've gotten together so far. We can look at the outline as a group and split up the work.

#### 6. Old business/New business.

Brendan asked the group what we thought about having "old business" and "new business" on the agenda since it's nice to fully warn the agenda rather than have surprise topics. Jessamyn commented that those headings leave space for someone in the public to bring something up. Brendan will keep that in the agenda in the future. Brendan reminded fellow members that they can and should weigh in on what goes on each month's agenda.

Jessamyn reported that she put all the information from the town forester on the website.

#### 7. Adjournment. Motion to adjourn by Jenny/Ian, 9-0-0. Meeting ended at 7:00pm.

Submitted by Jenny Davis, secretary.