

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:00pm
Randolph Conservation Commission
Meeting via Zoom

Attendees: Brendan Barden (Chair), Ian Blackmer, Harrison Drapo, Chandler Engel, Emily Lewis, Jessamyn West, Rachel Westbrook

Absent: Jenny Davis, Tom Harty, Zoe Newmarco

1. Call to order at 6:07 PM ET
2. Approval of February minutes

Motion to approve by Jessamyn/Ian 5-0-1 (Rachel abstained).

3. Membership

a. Zoe Newmarco needing to step down due to a change of residence. Harrison to be instated as voting commission member instead of an alternate.

Harrison expresses interest, he already went through selectboard approval once, hopefully doesn't need to again. Motion for the CC to nominate Harrison as a full voting member and change status from alternate member. Brendan/Emily, 6-0-0.

4. ERSA Grant update

a. Did not win the grant for Sayward trail improvements. Angus of Ridgeline asking if we want him to help submit the grant application below for the same work: <https://www.americantrails.org/apply-for-the-trail-fund>. The opportunity was passed on from the Executive Director of VMBA, who stated that this opportunity from American trails places the #1 priority on maintenance of state and local lands, are of a modest amount, (\$2-15K), and that the application looks pretty light/easy.

Brendan did hear back on the ERSA grant. The VBMA put forth a grant application to include the work in Randolph, and that proposal was not selected which included a much larger scope than work at Ellis/Sayward. Discussion about application for the American Trails application. Emily brought up the timing of logging work at Sayward and how that would affect things. Brendan indicated the logging would be in the winter and the trail work would be in the summer. Question about CC's level of commitment, Brendan indicates it is a thumbs up/thumbs down level of participation, scope would be the same or smaller than the ERSA grant. Deadline for application is April 15. CC discussed that the timeline was tight, as the work needed to be done by December 31st, this is a couple of months less time to complete the work.

Motion to give Ridgeline the go ahead with the application for the American Trails grant application assuming the scope is largely the same, or smaller than the ERSA grant previously approved by the CC and the work can be completed in the compressed timeline. The CC asks that a representative from Ridgeline attend the next meeting in April and confirm. Rachel/Emily, 6-0-0

5. Ellis Management Plan

a. Review draft forest management plan submitted by Orange County Forester

CC discussed the plan, consensus was that it was comprehensive. Brendan mentioned that timber harvesting was likely not permitted on the property due to the deed. Some language in the report such as references to firewood thinning and other management terms may suggest management for harvesting as a use. Brendan suggests that the report is run by Donna at the Vermont Land Trust to interpret the language around harvesting. Chandler asked about the separation between likely management activities such as invasives control and commercial harvesting. Emily and Brendan both felt that invasives control, tree planting and possibly timber stand improvement were sufficiently delineated. Suggest reviewing and potentially removing language about selective removal of certain quality trees etc. Brendan will send the plan to Donna for review.

b. Community feedback for Ellis Management Plan update

Emily mentioned everything looked good except for the map, which needs a better resolution map. Jessamyn will reach out to Angus and get a new map. Will ask Zoe to put the notice in the paper. No additional discussion.

6. Outreach Activities

a. White River Partnership is presenting findings and photos of physical assessment along the 2nd Branch mainstem via Zoom on April 7. They are planning a June meeting/field outing visit to a project implementation site in East Randolph, but details are not finalized.

Brendan received an email from Rudy, asking if CC would like to be a co-host of the event. Responsibilities of the co-host would be limited to posting/promoting the talk. The Clean Water Forum will be virtual Facebook event, from 6-7 PM on 7 April 2022.

Motion made to agree to be a co-host and create a poster (Jessamyn)/ post on front porch forum. Jessamyn/Brendan, 6-0-0.

7. Stormwater discharge erosion at S. Pleasant Street forest

a. Brendan can provide a brief history of the issue and actions taken by CC and Town of Randolph over the past 15 years, as well as recent conversation with Trevor about the issue and possible path forward.

Previous christmas tree placement in the forest was based on a suggestion by the White River Partnership, but that was only partially effective. Around 2015, the Town placed riprap in the gully. Brendan's thought is that the root cause is that it's a large catchment and lots of water being concentrated at a focused location. The Town is aware of the issue from the Maple Street Committee, and Trevor has indicated it could receive funding from a Town level. Chandler, Emily and anyone else who is interested will conduct a site visit at 1PM on Thursday 10 March.

8. Old Business

a. Sent email to Ridgeline on 3/6 with feedback from our February minutes. Can revisit when we hear back from them.

9. New Business

No new business.

10. Adjournment.

Motion to Adjourn Rachel/Jessamyn 6-0-0. Meeting ended at 7:02 PM