



Town of Rockingham
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Rockingham Conservation Commission

MONDAY February 12th 2024

MINUTES

Present: Peter Bergstrom, Jeff Bryan, Mike Ghia, Laurel Green, Alex Barrett, Christine Armiger, Hayden Smith

Absent: none

Guests: none

Called to order at 7:02 PM.

1. Approve Minutes of January—moved Alex, second Jeff, passed.
Alteration to the Agenda and Guests Introductions
2. Recruitment, Logistics, Networking and Communications
Direct outreach and general publicity; Filling Open Seats. Peter will ask town to add RCC and REC open positions to the list of positions to fill.
Expiring Terms up for renewal: Peter Bergstrom (reappointed) and Laurel Green (she will send Scott and Peter G. an email asking to be reappointed).
3. Sustainable Rockingham – no report. Laurel is part of a group holding a session on Sat 2/24, 10:30 at the library to educate residents on town meeting procedures.
Hazard Mitigation Plan Action Steps –Alex will work with Peter and Laurel on an educational session at the site of the May 2016 tree planting at the FEMA buyout parcel on 121 near Ski Bowl Rd. Peter will ask Marie Caduto if she could join us since she was part of the cleanup crew after Irene and was at the 2016 planting.
4. Conservation Commission coordination with Planning Commission -- Jeff volunteered to keep track of the PC agenda items each month before the RCC meets, to see if there are issues of interest to the RCC, and report to us if there are.

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6. Energy Committee Report

Town Enhanced Energy Plan –working on it. Planning Commission will consider the Energy Chapter this week. Key recommendations in it:

- The Energy Coordinator be paid as a part-time employee of the town
- The composition of the Energy Committee to include a Selectboard member or designee

Mapping Preferred Solar Locations—no recent action, Peter will follow up

Other Committee Activities—Scheduled First Home Energy Forum on weatherization, Thurs 3/21, John Dunbar (Farnum) & John Hyslop (SEVCA), 6:30 at library & on Teams

Mike mentioned new solar array design with bi-facial solar panels mounted vertically in north-south rows, with hay or other crops planted between them (not corn which grows too high). This also matches their output better to demand (more in the morning and evening). Mike will



share a link to a video.

Laurel mentioned the Renewable Energy bill, which had community solar sent to study, but it is still part of the bill.

7. Herricks Cove, Williams River, Saxtons River and CT River

Outstanding Resource Waters Designations –meeting on Wed. March 6, 6:30 pm at the library. Mike said Margo is working on the maps and a letter to abutters. Peter will ask Margo about the maps and making lists of the abutters based on the maps. Hayden asked how the Williams Scenic Reach was chosen, especially since the lower Williams has impaired water quality in the 2021 Tactical Basin Plan. Hayden has seen the ORW proposal for the Herricks Cove area but not for the Williams. Peter will ask Margo to share a draft of it with RCC members along with the draft map.

Hydro-dam FERC Relicensing Process—no update.

Rockingham asked for 2 volunteers for the CT River Joint Commission. Jeff and Hayden are interested and will contact Scott Pickup.

Herricks Cove Wildlife Festival, Sunday May 5th

8. Walk Bike Committee and other Rockingham Trail Initiatives

The RFP for the TAP grant to design the BF Riverfront Trail extension to Paper Mill Rd is waiting for review by VTrans. Then it will go to StanTech for their reply; if accepted by WRC, we'll kick off with a site visit.

Group is studying pedestrian and bike counts in BF, will suggest safety upgrades, especially in the Square.

9. Other Activities Natural Resources

Green Up Day is Saturday May 4th (including Rivers)

Building Bat and Kestrel Boxes for Earth Day—Christine said VA plans to do this on April 18. Peter, Alex and Jeff plan to be involved.

VT Conservation Strategy <https://www.vhcb.org/our-programs/VCSI> -- Mike gave an update and encouraged us to follow its progress. Mike mentioned how the work impacts land conservation, and Hayden followed up with possible changes to management of state conservation lands. Hayden mentioned IRA funding for forest land conservation in VT that can match state funds, which has some flexible funding options.

Invasives – Beech Leaf Disease, see <https://www.vtinvasives.org/invasive/beechn-leaf-disease> Alex encouraged us to report any infected trees we see to map its spread in the state, using a form on the VT Invasives website which requires photos and location. Peter will post about it on the RCC Facebook page.

10. Announcements of Events of relevance to the RCC Mission-none

11. Confirm NEXT MEETING Monday, March 11th

For our April meeting, Mike will ask Amy Howlett when the Village annual meeting will be, so we can avoid meeting in April on eclipse day (April 8) and on that meeting day.

Adjourned at 8:20 PM, moved by Jeff.

Minutes by Peter Bergstrom, Clerk, 2-13-24.