

Jay Community Land Discussion
Meeting Notes for December 21, 2023 1:00 pm
Town of Jay Municipal Building

1. Welcome - Ellen Fox

In attendance:

David Sanders, Chair, Jay Selectboard

Dianne Laplante, Zoning Administrator for the Town of Jay

Lindsey Wight, Executive Director Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA) and the Upper Missisquoi Wild and Scenic Committee and resident of Jay

Dean and Cricket Wilbert, seasonal residents of Jay

Spencer Berenberg, resident of the Town of Jay and adjoining neighbor

Ellen Fox, Project Manager, Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA)

Bill Stenger, representing Michael Goldberg, Jay Peak Receivership

2. Brief introductions – Who we are and why we are interested and participating

Everyone introduced themselves and shared about their interest in the land between Cross Road and Revoir Flat.

3. Update on status of parcel between Cross Road and Revoir Flat – Bill Stenger

Bill provided an overview of the approach the Receiver is taking to the sale of this property. Bill is representing Michael Goldberg and is tasked with responding to any interest in the property. It is the receiver's responsibility to maximize the purchase price. At the same time, there is recognition that the parcel has been flooded and progressively naturalized since the most recent conveyance of the land to Quiros (estimated ~2002), and so that transaction may not reflect the current value of the parcel. Bill had Jeff Parsons assess the wetland areas on the parcel and Jeff's estimate of "developable" land is approximately 25 out of the 197 acres. Bill expressed that there is significant interest in conveyance of the land for a multi-faceted project that can serve the needs of the town. He elaborated on an example in Burke where there is a plan in motion for the fire company to construct a much-needed fire pond, and the pond could provide other services such as community recreation along a popular trail system. He encouraged the attendees to create a mixed-use plan with community support.

4. Discussion of the potential for community ownership and community uses

The ideas and comments that came up in discussion include:

- It is important to hold early conversations with Jay residents and share that this is a developing project, not a foregone conclusion or set plan.
- A fire pond would provide public safety and perhaps lower insurance costs for residents in the Town of Jay. A pond and trail would offer recreational options for the community.
- Interest in Town ownership of the parcel
- The parcel is ideally located across from the existing recreation area
- There is a need for middle income, workforce, and senior housing with both rental and ownership options. This can be done in a way that is compact and conserves open space.
- It would be helpful to look at examples of existing joint residential and conservation projects.

- The MRBA has resources to invest in a conservation tree nursery to grow tree seedlings for conservation projects. The soil types on the parcel are ideal for this work and the nursery can provide investment and maintenance of infrastructure that would complement community use of the land, such as a meeting space, outdoor classroom, restroom along the trail.
- Funding sources might be available to move a project forward. David Snedeker at NVDA could assist with identifying these sources, and should be invited into the conversation.
- Development of a unified proposal will take time, and the receiver can be patient if the eventual conveyance results in a project that serves multiple community needs.
- It is important to develop a preliminary site plan to envision how all the parts of a conservation plan and limited development plan would work together.
- The plan can be discussed with the Selectboard, the Zoning Board, and perhaps moved forward at Town Meeting.

5. Next Steps

Anyone interested in being part of the working group (henceforth called the “Jay Land Group”) provided contact information.

We will gather input to develop a site plan, and a clear, realistic path to achieve unified goals for community use of the land.

Ellen will create a draft plan and distribute it to the working group and then discuss at the next meeting set for Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 1 pm at the Jay Municipal Building.