

Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 2nd, 2021: Jay Peak Resort, Jay, VT

Attendees: Paul Stanley, Ellen Fox, Craig Cimmons, and Lindsey Wight; Wendy Scott, Cynthia Scott, and Brian Jerose joined via Zoom.

- 1) Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.
- 2) We opened the meeting by discussing the Knockout Knotweed event held on August 7th: not a huge turnout (rainy), but good conversations and interest from those that did stop by. People enjoyed the novelty of the knotweed sorbet.

We also discussed the Swanton clean-up and the event with the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi at the wildlife refuge, both held on August 28th: clean riverbanks – only pulled 3 bags of trash, and no tires! There was good attendance at the ANM event. The War Canoe is really neat – a great vehicle to bring organizations and people together. We should continue to partner with ANM and bring people together through activities, through the material culture – the Montgomery Center for the Arts programs have been doing this, as well.

- 3) WS motioned to accept the minutes from our August meeting as written; PS seconds. All in favor.
- 4) Altering the agenda order for the next few items: 25th year celebration – CC spoke with Jay Peak folks and they said that a good band with a following could cost \$800-\$1000. Happy to work with us. Could do it in the IR? JP would provide the food, would offer discounts for rooms, waterpark, etc. for attendees. BUT what about COVID? Seems like we should put it off until next year; COVID is a ready excuse for us to celebrate “25” years next year.

What time to aim for: Bean and Brew in October? Prefer summertime/early June – then we can do a paddle, too. With this timeline, we need to have things in place by Mar/April. Craig will set a date by our next meeting, and will talk to JP folks about identifying a local band that we might work with.

- 5) North Troy Farm and Forest. Ellen provided an update on this project – exploring options to conserve ~900 acres along the Missisquoi River in North Troy. Currently listed for sale by Durward and Lorraine Starr, the property has gotten interest/offers for portions, but the Starr’s are interested in selling it as one if possible. Ellen’s proposal re-envisioned ~180 acres of the property as something of a research farm: grazing animals in silvopasture, incubator farm activities, Rural Edge developing farmworker housing on the part of the parcel nearest the Village. The rest would be primarily forest conservation – including a place to propagate herbaceous seed mix, to have a riparian plantings nursery, a network of trails to appreciate the forest, and primitive camps and other recreation opportunities (an inventory of this landscape is needed – Native Plant Trust?).

There are lots of grant programs to suit these diverse opportunities, including funds for development – but acquisition funds are harder to identify. Primary targets are Vermont Land Trust (with easements), and VHCB or NRCS.

Likely process: a farmer cooperative would acquire the agricultural land, perhaps with an FSA loan. Then apply easements to reduce overall costs; then do fundraising to conserve this gem. Review/approval of both the June and July meeting minutes.

Timeline: Starrs would like to have something settled before heading south for the winter – a Purchase and Sales agreement in place, with a certain amount of time to close? Getting an appraiser, but unlikely he can complete by Oct 1... After appraisal: an entity (VLT? MRBA?) would make an offer “with a year to figure out the funding”. We’d likely need some earnest money for such an agreement.

Many partners – but who could own? So many interests, but it doesn’t fit any one mission. Ellen has

been pursuing this – but once the conservation appraisal comes in, she may need help – and may need to id more funds at this point to flesh out actual plans for the property.

- 6) Budget planning: Admin/Communications person – seek someone with budget/tracking experience, too?

Grant needs and opportunities: canoeing events with the War Canoe – could be a good fit for CVNHP applications (out now, but couldn't use funds until next fall). Craig is also interested in building voyager canoe paddles for the War Canoe – maybe also CVNHP? Side note: Alnowabi display at Ethan Allen has a paddle display.

Knotweed ongoing – LCBP AIS again; match with FERC projects?

Craig would like to build a mobile-trailer stream table – remove the onerous set up and break down (and drying!) step of most stream tables. Possibly the LCBP Large E&O grant? Want to work with students for Water InSight with the smaller E&O grant.

Programs and Projects: Lindsey provided an updated document, let her know if you have questions. Maybe touch on again during the October meeting, as time allows?

- 7) Upcoming: Sarah Lunn will be starting with us on September 20th, so the Board will meet her at our October meeting (if not before).

Joanna Jerosse is working with us to organize a river clean-up near the Sheldon School with the 8th graders – looking at either Sept 15 or Sept 22.

UMATR will again hold their Montgomery River Clean-Up on September 11th – come to Riverwalk to participate!

- 8) No other business to discuss.
- 9) Next meeting will be at the Bakersfield Fire Station, with a Zoom option.
- PS motioned; CS seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.