

Jay Selectboard Joint Meeting with the Missisquoi River Basin Association  
Thursday, January 18, 2024  
Jay Municipal Building  
Minutes

MRBA Members Present: Ellen Fox, Lindsey Wight, John Little

Jay Selectboard Present: Dave Sanders

Others Present: Pat Sanders (Jay Selectboard Clerk), Arnold Cota,  
Matt Wilson ( Barton Chronicle), Ed barber (Newport Daily), Bill Stenger,  
Geegee Zaveson, Bryan Bowers, Cricket & Dean Wilber, Spencer Berenberg,  
Dianne Leplante ( Jay Zoning Administrator), Bill DiCarlo (Jay Country Riders)  
Jim Sugden ( Jay Country Riders), Sally Rivard (JCRC)

1. Welcome and call meeting to order
  - A. Ellen called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
2. Recap and brief introductions –Introductions of participants in the group
  - A. Ellen asked everyone to introduce themselves and mention why they are attending this meeting.
  - B. Ellen gave a brief introduction of what has been done so far. Highlights of the past meeting focused on possible uses of the land for Town and community purposes as well as identifying the topography of the land.
3. Recap of notes from the December meeting & “next steps” identified from that meeting:
  - A. Possible uses of the land were identified as:
    - A fire pond would provide public safety by not only creating a stable water source for the fire Department, but eliminating the need to draft from the Jay Branch bridge on the Cross Road. It could possibly lower insurance costs for residents in the Town of Jay. A pond and trail would offer recreational options for the community and create a focal point for the Town.
    - The Town is interested in owning the land in order to control development so that it is beneficial to the Town’s needs.
    - Creation of middle income, workforce, and/or senior housing with both rental and ownership options designed in a way that is compact and conserves open space. Bill and Dianne suggested 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.
  - B. 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.

C. Next steps identified at the December meeting were:

- Contact information was collected from everyone interested in being part of the working group, henceforth called the “Jay Land Group”.
- Gather input to develop a general 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.

4. Discussion of physical attributes of the Cross Rd parcel

- A. There is a large area that is designated by ANR as a high priority for wetland restoration and there may be funding available for restoration and mitigation in that area. That designation also prohibits development in that area. (see light green area on Map 1)
- B. There is a small area that is the only suitable area for building purposes. (See blue area on Map 1)
- C. There is significant flood hazard area identified by FEMA (see mustard color on Map 1)
- D. There are a number of access points along Cross Road with a pre-existing farm road across from the JCRC property.
- E. Potential locations for a fire pond were identified and shown on Map 2.
- F. Map 2 shows a number of streams and water sources flowing on or near the property as indicated by the pink lines
- G. The parcel is ideally located across from the existing recreation area.

5. Discussion of potential uses and conceptual site plan

- A. Most everyone present was in favor of the site plan and potential uses.
- B. Dianne suggested that possibly the fire pond could be expanded to include recreational purposes. Ellen did caution that often times funding for fire ponds restrict how they can be used. But that is a possibility to research.
- C. In response to a question from Pat, Ellen & Lindsey identified a variety of funding sources that could be used to offset the cost of purchasing the property or developing the potential uses. Dave mentioned that ARPA funds which have not already been assigned could possibly be used to offset the cost to the Town.
- D. In response to a question from Dianne, Ellen explained that the buildable land that has been identified could be done with traditional septic systems and the cost to hook up to the town sewer may be cost prohibitive. However that is something that will certainly be researched when the time comes.
- E. Many participants were in favor of planned unit housing especially for seniors.
- F. Past and current landowners have given permission for VAST and the Catamount Trail to utilize the property. Many were concerned that if the land is sold on the open market, that access could be revoked and it would be very expensive for VAST to reroute that major trail. Allowing VAST and the Catamount Trail continued use of their trails would be part of the site planning process.
- G. Matt asked what the asking price for the property is. Dave said it is currently assessed by the Town for just over \$300,000 but it was purchased by Quiros for \$600,000. They have not been given a price by the receiver yet, but that will be the first “next step” since the whole project hinges on its affordability by the Town.

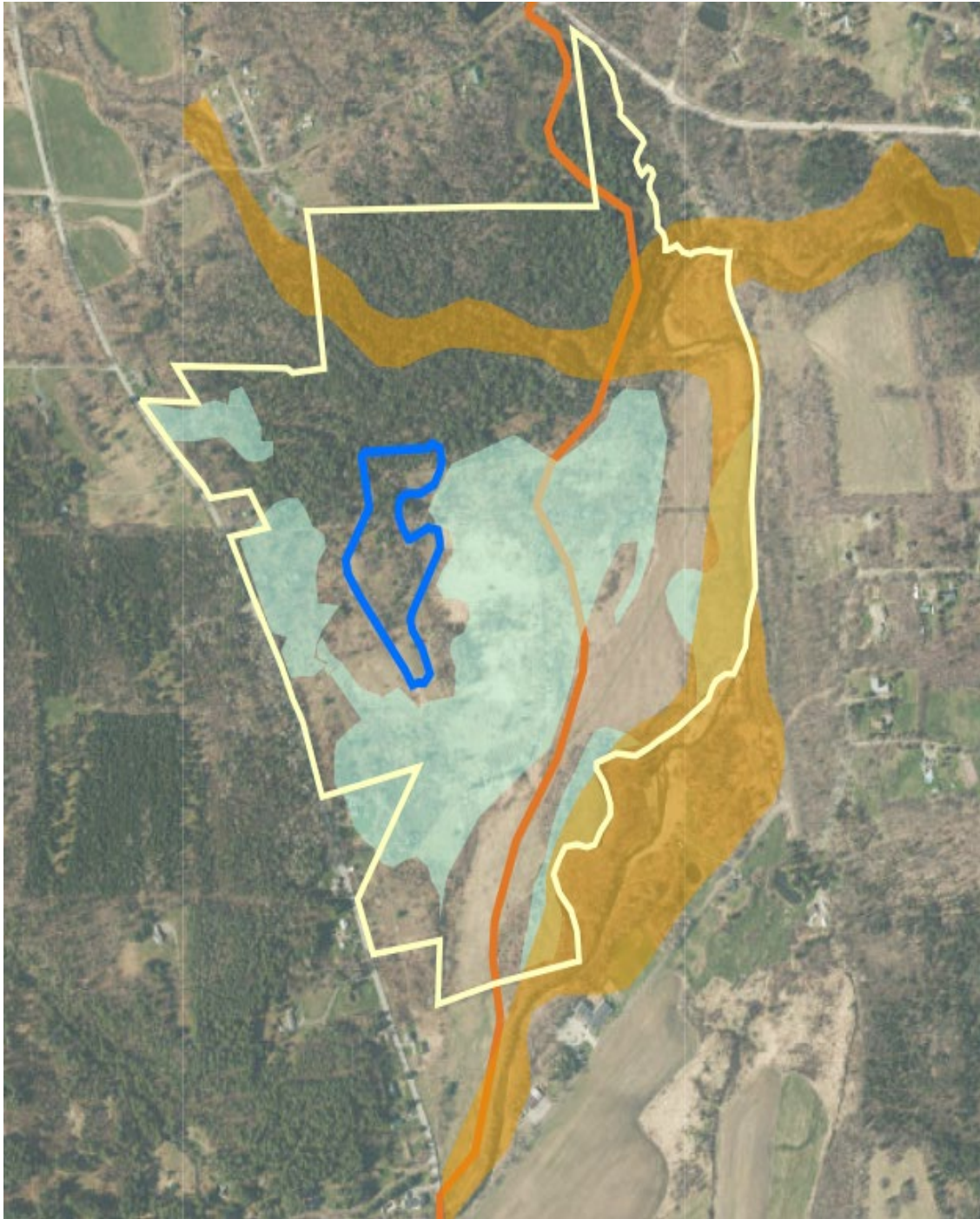
- H. Sally questioned if ponds or trails can be built on wetlands. Ellen said a fire pond could be built but is not sure if a recreational pond that would create additional traffic would be allowed.
- I. Geegee emphasized that this property is a focal point for the Town of Jay and would be a great asset to the Town and its residents. She would hate to see it go to a developer or private owner who has no regard for the abundance of wildlife on the property, the natural beauty and clarity of water on the land or the rural nature of our town.
- J. Ellen mentioned that the total property consists of three individual parcels.

#### 6. Next Steps

- A. Bill suggested that one of the next steps would be to see if there is any opposition to the proposals especially about the development of housing on the property. It was mentioned that oftentimes the opposition does not appear until there is a solid plan that is being put up for a vote.
- B. All agreed that the next step should be to pursue an appraisal to form a fair market value for the property in order to establish a purchase price.
- C. Bill also suggested that, should the Town agree to the plans for the property, it would be a good idea to research other community housing projects throughout the state that have been successful.
- D. Bill and Dave emphasized that there needs to be a commitment from the Town of Jay residents in order to have the plans come to fruition. It will not happen, nor can it be sustained, if only a few people are involved. It would be great to have this put on the warning for town meeting in March, however that may not be feasible for this year.
- E. Research needs to be done on possible funding sources for different aspects of this proposal which includes: purchasing the land, creating the pond, building the planned community housing project, creating roads and trails, developing the tree nursery and feasibility studies and finalized conceptual plans.






- 7. Next meeting will be determined at a later date. Ellen asked anyone who would like to be part of the “Jay Land Group” and help move this project forward should sign the contact list on the table. Notification of the next meeting will be sent by e-mail.
- 8. Ellen closed the meeting at 2:05 p.m. with a thank you to all who participated.

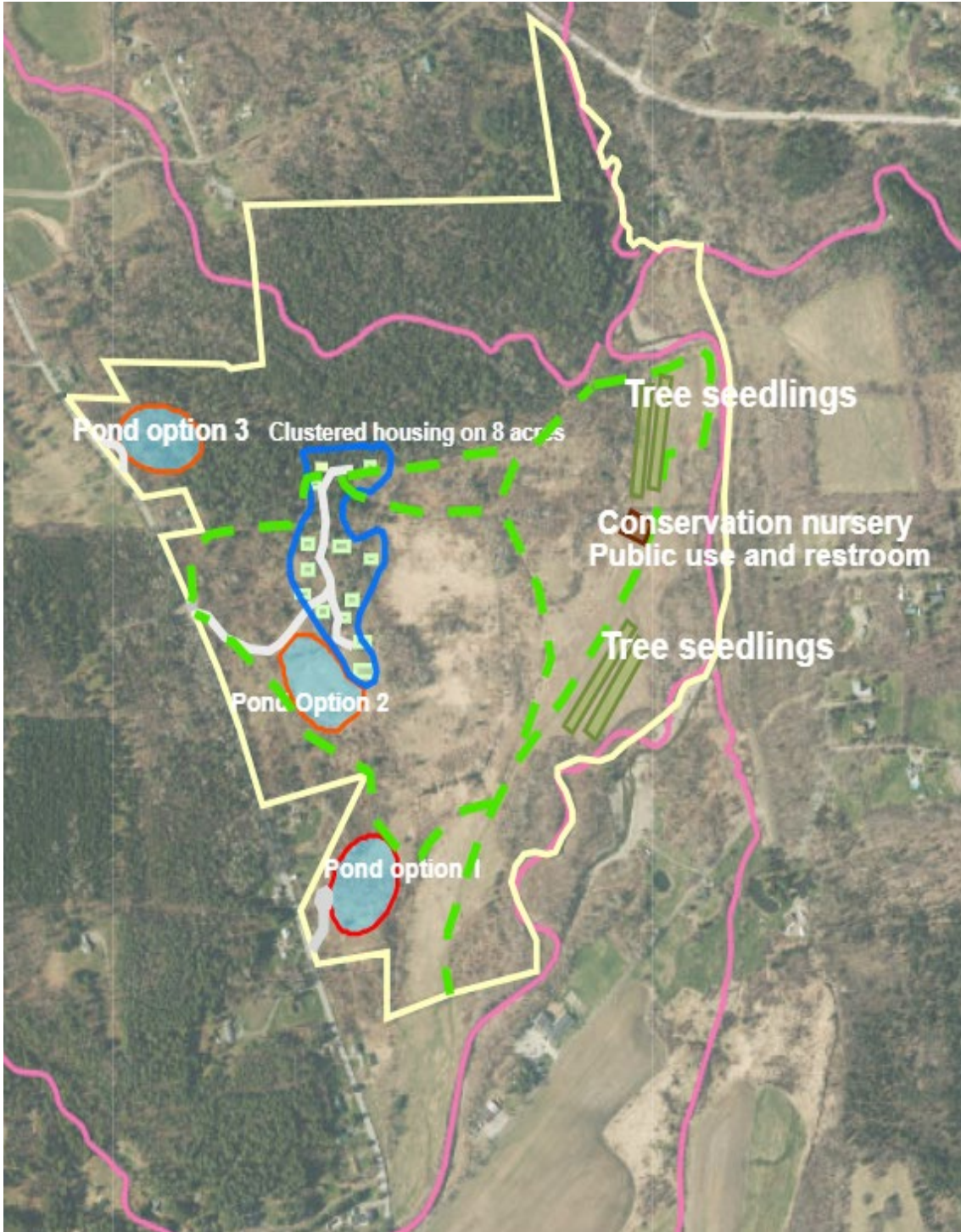
Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Sanders



**Map 1**

**Physical Attributes of the Cross Road parcel:**

-  FEMA Flood Hazard Area
-  Wetlands
-  Soils suitable for on-site septic
-  VAST and Catamount Trail
-  Parcel boundary



**Map 2**

**Exploratory Site Plan**

Soils suitable for on-site septic

Potential walking trails

Streams

Parcel boundary