

SNRCC MINUTES AUGUST 9, 2023

AGENDA

Present: Don Rendall, Chandler Noyes, Gail Albert, Christine Bevaqua, Jon Cocina, Sean MacFaden, Bob Paquin. **Absent:** Fred Morton

Guests: Nathan Irons, Matt Lawless, Rosemary Sadler, Jonathan Richardson, Charlie Jones (Paths Committee rep), Sara Ray, Aaron Demur, Jim White, Mark Pennington, Donna Fialko,

Meeting called to order by Don 7:07 PM,

Review and approve agenda Don, moved to approve the agenda, Chandler second, All approved.

Minutes approved with correction (Christine was not present). Sean moved; Bob seconded; all Yes

Identify minute taker: Gail

Public Comment: None

- **Charlie Jones presented Bike and Paths committee draft strategic Plan** Charlie Jones noted committee member visited most committees, ccrpc and other CBC's. Time is key for strategic plan as Shelburne moves from a small rural village starting to become more urban and needing infrastructure. They see NRCC as key steward and when proposing critical paths in natural areas want to be sure we sync and consider Arrowwood report and NR data. Among priorities Safe routes for kids to go to school.

Reading from Aug. 7 version of the strategic plan and are now ready to share draft to Select Board on Sept 26, with a project list for the next 3 years. Vision: Planned development, interconnected services and lanes for all ages and linking neighborhoods, Safe streets to schools, non- vehicular mobility options.

Key sections: existing data on where treasured places are, mapping level of traffic stress, navigability by bikers and walkers. Bike lanes on Rt 7 north exist but not safe b/c of traffic speed and density. Like to see development more similar to Webster Road paths. Want to link non vehicular traffic to move safely to town resources.

Rt 7 a chokepoint. Have a shared safety budget of \$50k and believe there are oppty's for other funding, like CIP, ARPA. Stakeholders: CPRPC, Bike and Paths of neighboring towns. Resident listening sessions, PTO, CBCs, Seeking lots of input from citizens.

Comments: Jon CBCs, apt to see change from Rt 7; Sara, is Beach a treasured place?

Charlie: Looking to get a shared use path down Lake road to the vineyard; prefer not dedicated lanes on Bostwick, but would like more of a shared use path. The possibility to travel down Harbor Road, but difficult travel would be better at Meach Cove side.

Chandler: thinks there was already a study by CCRPC in Oct. or Nov. Charles: Disappointed that it just rank-ordered previous studies, but it is still a source of input. Looking at road improvements to get from Ti Haul to Shelburne Farm. Worked with Town to get funding, but cost increases could delay that til' next year. Still confident it can be done, and the Goal is to get them done.

Christine: What are the priorities? Charles: Still in draft form. Member working with Bike and Paths. Table at Shelburne Days will propose a cycle of projects: Road improvements, dedicated bike lanes up Irish Hill, Bridge at LaPlatte is closer to starting, but requires state funding.

Rosemary: is there a plan for a shared use path, but it's now looking like a dedicated bike lane,

Charles: Falls Rd and Marsett needs to stay wide enough for more than non-vehicular users.

Perhaps a traffic calming experiment will be done on Spear St. with Local Motion. Gail: how do you do a temporary electronic installation for that? Looking to reduce lane width from 14 feet to 11 ft. Hope pilot will be up in Sept.

Chandler: given weather in VT, how to make it happen safely with plowing needs. Charles: Whatever gets built needs to be built and sustained. Benefit of shared use paths is that they're not needing Highway adjacent so can be managed separately. Matt: there's a small tractor for paths on order already. It's clear that inability to maintain it is not a reason not to do it; we need to plan strategically.

Will there be trails and from Ti Hall to Shelburne Farms. Charles: Now Harbor and Barstow are hard because of blind rises. Want to complete Harbor Road back to Village and create a Ti Haul, Harbor, Shelburne Farm loop. Also, loops for sidewalks to get kids to school that provides links for kids from Hullcrest.

How do you envision working with SNCC in Natural Areas? Charles: Regular communication

Jon—are there overpasses/underpasses for wildlife? Gail asked if any plan for a wildlife crossing for Pond Road. Charles noted: not aware of a planned install there.

Charles: Paths Committee doesn't have ability to keep in touch and manage misuse of trails.

There's a trail network Town owns behind Boulder Hill – town owns the land, but it doesn't have any plan now. Needs to be formalized and not be evaded by NIMBYism. Access between private neighborhoods. Challenges: Charles invites us to give comments promptly in next few weeks for timely updates before SB presentation.

PlaceSense Administrative Procedures

Don: How important is the role an Advisory Committee has in the Admin Procedures. Most of stuff re: NR will be in later chapter. Gail: Where will definitions be addressed; they're critical to be accessible as someone reviews any section their project must comply with. Aaron: It'll be a chapter of its own and apply to entirety of new regs. PC wanted to do Admin procedures first.

Don: Will there be an electronic version with clickable links. And can they do the Definitions at the same time as the Regs with links. Aaron thought it would be like that.

Don: In Section 2 when regs are being discussed with a new environmental overlay, some formatted sections refer to Environmental Review. At the last SNRCC meeting we tabled a vote if we are interested in an Advisory role to this meeting.

Followup PlaceSense meeting, "Advisory Committee" idea

Don: What do we need to know as an Advisory Committee. Aaron: We'd still be making recommendations. Meetings would be more like HPDRC. We could schedule meetings 2ce monthly as needed to meet the 15-day response deadline. We'd need to look at properties and see fieldwork on them. Projects in Env. Overlay District are what SNRCC will have the advisory role on. Gail: What would the Overlay consist of. Gail: there are properties in other parts of Town that have resources that need protection including some noted on Arrowwood Map. Aaron: As the document develops there will be an opportunity to designate certain resources that require awareness and careful planning.

Jim White: Should NRCC be more involved in zoning process? Aaron: PC meetings show that strong advocacy for environment will be very important going forward. Jim: Should NRCC be split in 2 with one advocating for conservation/other for monitoring development?

Sean: in some ways since we just have an advisory role it seems there is no change from how we used to operate— we used to meet with developers and would be included on site walks. If our ultimate authority wouldn't be affected, if it makes sense to take on Advisory role.

Gail: Would advisory role would only apply to overlay? Where would the overlay be and would it include more of our current developed and growth area. Aaron: That is still unclear and will be determined later.

Bob, Locking into an undefined Overlay is troublesome. If there's an area out of the Overlay, we must keep our eyes open.

Chandler. When will Zoning districts be considered? Aaron in Spring. We shouldn't be limited to a specific zone. It should be our decision whether we feel it's important to make comments. Most changes have a NR component.

In rural area, all subdivisions must be PUD's.

John, it would save money for the town if we had oversight as we deemed it important. Aaron, by statute, advisory would only be as we are already. Several SNRCC members thought they'd seen a contradictory distinction between "commission" and "committee". Aaron observed we were already a Commission. Disagreement remained. Decision to take a vote: Gail moves be Advisory, Don seconded. Unanimous. Yes. Someone noted that Charlotte had recently changed status to Commission and received Advisory authority. Discussion again about what that would mean.

Farmer's market at Shelburne Days: who can show up: Bob, Gail and Chandler and Don can participate. Invite VCRD to discuss initiatives???

Forest Habitat Block ranking: Don Unlikely to be able to get all identified blocks into overlay. Need to prioritize. Chandler: focus on ones now currently protected. Jonathan: preserve wetlands, riparian

corridors b/c it's where most of wildlife is going through. Town should do an invasive species control plan because erosion is not being managed effectively along Laplatte.

SNRCC/CCRPC combines maps of both in an overlay. Sean: Arrowwood is good. What we decide to prioritize is arbitrary. How do we decide? We have evidence that all are important, one way or another, so is there some protections we can develop a planning mechanism for that reduces impact in some capacity? What can be done to mitigate negative effects on any of them, so it's impossible to ID a threshold of protection.

Aaron: If regs say take account of resources when you develop property, if you change that requirement for a property, then we've "taken development rights." Matt: That is true. Once an owner, one has control of property.

Gail: To counteract the "taking" concept we need to educate landowners with our maps and non-property distinguishing informational session on how to protect what you own and take note of what's there. Have a widely promoted panel discussion with guests from 3rd party Conservation Orgs, Fish and Wildlife, Audubon, for example discussing resources and strategies if you're not interest in conserving, other types of available protections.

Mark – hard to id overlay without identified regulations. Need to help landowners to read off what would have been a connector, or habitat blocks, in some cases it should be responsibility of landowner to id and there need to be alternative strategies for protection like transfer of development rights. We need first to know if there's an overlay for prohibition or a higher level of review for critical properties. Somewhere there needs to be an outline of the regulated and non-regulated criteria. We need to understand what the proposals actually are prior to identifying priority parcels.

Don: We (SNRCC) want to come up with draft environmental regs for PC and PS to start with when they get to this issue.

Chandler: could there be triggers, for a heightened level of review?

Most important NR's are already protected by Act 250 although not all applications are covered.

We need to Table this item for further discussion at the next meeting to finish the agenda.

Town budgeting Matt: I have responsibility for capital budgeting. PC approves capital programs and infrastructure. It's Impressive that Paths has a strategic plan. SB has ARPA What is SNRCC's Budget Plan?

Gail explained history of Conservation funding, since late 90's SNRCC has had a ballot item and charter suggest we only work with willing landowners. We propose, SB approves amount to be placed on ballot every year for citizen vote on Town Ballot for Saving in interest bearing account to be available for conservation. Projects are usually in concert with a far larger contribution by 3rd party Conservation Organizations like TNC, VLT, LCLT, Audubon and VHCB Sean: At one point we had 1cent/tax rate for about 3 years, but then some years with very little approved by SB. Ballot request usually among highest positive votes.

Matt: SB has already approved \$50 K from ARPA for NRCC but it must be spent within a short Deadline. Sean: if there are small parcels to be set for trails, maybe we can work with paths to ID and use ARPA

monies for that because as Gail noted, large partnership conservation projects can take years to materialize.

Bob. Current Balance in OSF, \$315 plus \$50 from last budget and the ARPA. There's also a small pool of \$\$ all committees can draw from.

Matt: who consents to be included in a conservation project?

Sean – OSF contribution is a ballot rather than a line item to test town moods as to whether the Town would advocate to continue that annual contribution.

Don: It has been a good while since our last conservation project so we are getting due for a new surprise.

Landowner outreach/other business Christine, what can Paths collaboration do. Charles: Give access for a primitive trail, they can share their plan.

Aaron: The PC October meeting needs a proposal from us of how much and what we want to spend. Perhaps it could be used for ROW acquisition with ARPA money. Must be spent on land acquisition for conservation.

Outreach: Bob, we could have a panel. We can use CBC funding we have to get VLT and TNC and others to see who they may already be working with in Shelburne. Also, do Landowner's even know their property is on Arrowwood? Reach out to VCRD to include.

Christine move to adjourn

Matt then noted we have a lot on our plate. Did we take on too much by voting to become an advisory committee? Sean is comfortable with what we've chosen because it's just like we had in the past before Dean departed. Should we plan second meeting this month Re: who should interview new members: Put an asterisk on it to discuss at next meeting.

Chandler, second all in favor.