

SNRCC meeting 10/11/2023

Attendees – Don, Aaron, Sean, Gail, Chandler, Bob, Fred (note taker), Don Elkins, Al Karnatz (Vermont Land Trust), Christine joined late

Motion to approve minutes but make an amendment adding trail item – passed. Minutes of last meeting approved.

Al:

He does all the farm conservation work

Has done a couple of projects here in Shelburne

Reactive process for him – does not go out and seek properties

Most of properties are not easements, property is paid for

Compensation is necessary as debt is associated with farms.

Gail:

Reason Vermont Land trust is here – in part selectboard has become more interested in conservation.

Process is the same for the town – need to be approached by landowners.

Considerations in having a land trust – is it right for town.

Issue that was raised by VLT – are you a committee or a trust?

Aaron:

not a committee but a commission

Al

– takes a lot of staying power to keep trust going. One of the more critical components – perpetual easements. Not short term.

Local land trusts have been great partners. And fundraisers.

Vermont and at the federal level there is scrutiny on valuations and funding.

Average land trust – 200 acres.

South Hero and Stowe have paid positions. Stowe is particularly well funded.

Land trusts have been particularly critical in getting donors.

Milton an example of land trust that faded away. Loss of interest part of the problem. No renewing of 501c3.

Middlebury is not keen about easements. Well funded, paid staff.

Bob, Al's partner, focused on parks, swimming hole – recreationally focused. Different easements – not as restrictive as farm easements.

Bob

How do we approach landowners about issue of conservation. A big issue

Al

A story – a property like a donut hole. All around conserved land. A problem
Expenses associated with conserving land – a tough ask when someone is donating property
and then you want them to pay fees. Once conserved needs insurance, maintenance funds.

Sean

When should we touch base with VLT? Under what conditions

Al

Knows values of easements in his farm areas.

Don

Value of land is equal to value of easement. Can pay less but not more than the value. Once
conservation is applied, value falls to half.

Mentioned Livy Strong in Underhill/Jericho, as being someone to talk to.

Gail:

In this market, what are the challenges.

Al:

Does not do cold calls on property owners. Recommends a person who is close to and knows
land owner personally to make the suggestion.

Might come to a second meeting, as has happened. Unless he knows them.

Gail

Budgeting funds for land varies with select boards. There was more enthusiasm twenty years
ago.

Al

Talks of Bristol – town makes a reasonable donation every year

Says he would be glad to hear from any of us that may need his thoughts.

Gail

Introduces connectivity map.

Sean

Talks to Al on how connectivity maps can work.

Don

Is there regulatory language that should govern these areas? Does the committee have/want
reg language?

Mentions what South Burlington did in regard to wildlife corridors – allowed 200 feet on either side of corridor center line

Sean

What criteria can be used to minimize impacts on corridor? Possibly work with contractors.

In response to comments, Sean notes we have been emphasizing clustered. Especially in moving clustering structures close to roads.

Gail

How do protect existing corridors when new homeowners are cutting trees and doing things that are infringing on corridors.

Aaron

Not much we can do. Unless on the lake shore.

Don

Do we want to bring some regulatory language to the corridors for the Bylaw rewrite?

Don

Do we want to do what South Burlington has done? Gail expressed her support

Aaron

Looking at the map. Could put on a new overlay. Would be a significant amount of town's property. Would mean a lot more work for this commission – would need to meet more than once a month.

Don

No strong sense of direction about regulating corridors. Will table the item for another meeting

Looking at table of contents – subtractions and deletions from list of possible.

Is there any interest in forming a subcommittee to ~~look~~ develop at the contents

Sean

Could we meet as a committee in some sort of retreat to make these decisions

Gail

A suggestion about how to proceed – a subcommittee would be useful

Aaron

Place Sense should be at any gathering

December would be a better month to convene

Don

Select board is looking to us for improving on an open space plan

Sean

Sounds like the select board wants us to make a plan. But is this wise in doing something that would be a public document

Gail

How can we get in touch with people whose properties are important in any future plan? A direct approach, such as knocking at doors, seems difficult at best

Aaron

Selectboard looking to put together a plan which would at least provide some direction for a property owner that might be interested in conservation

Selectboard would like someone to do the private fundraising – possibly this committee.

Sean

Question about what has happened with development review.

Bob

We should look at the charter before starting to edit

Don

What do we need to do make us a commission rather than a committee

Aaron

Town was not set up with a commission. Nevertheless, language in docs says we should be a commission.

Don

Calls for anyone to make a motion.

Don makes motion the committee will ask Town Manager and Select Board to declare us a commission.

Seconded by Sean.

Approved by all.

Aaron

(Now looking at solar array development application proposal on property on Summerfield Rd)
Grateful owners asked about housing envelope. Town does not have authority over solar panels.
Nice they asked the town about building envelope.

Christina

Seems like a few trees will be removed. Doesn't seem that consequential

Don

Comments

Sean.

If building envelope expanding, will there be an attempt to put more structures up. Could the envelope be limited

Aaron

Interesting idea

Sean

Proposes we limit envelope

Don

Property for sale on Rt 116 \$250,000 asked. Property has limitations in terms of development

Bob

Sees an opportunity.

Gail

Brings up Guillemette property. Are they angry about an earlier deal with the land trust? Feels there might be better properties to invest in

Sean

What are the restrictions on this property? Should be apprised of those before proceeding

Don

Signs and flags. What about designing a sign.

Fred

Will do a prototype

Chandler

Trail issues – exceptions make changes possible. Stay in the footprint of existing work. Improve the existing trail. Would avoid some issues in permitting process. And costs from \$1000 to \$2000. If they did not move trail.

Aaron

Nixes idea. Doesn't want to do a project in a class I wetlands area. And use staff time expanding this path.

Chandler

Fix trail. Don't expand.

Getting close to the river is a risk as river will erode bank and break down trail.

Gail

Motions to adjourn. Sean seconds. All approve.