

Andrews Community Forest Committee
Monday June 24th, 2024 - 6:00 to 7:30 pm

- Roll call and confirm Quorum. This meeting did not have a quorum; therefore, a regular meeting was not held.
- Present: Daniel Schmidt, Wright Preston, Brad Elliott, Melissa Wolaver
- Absent: Ian Stokes, Cecelia Danks, Chase Rosenberg, Julian Portilla
- Public: Sam Pratt, with Bob Lowe, and Daniel Wolfson joining later
- Minutes: Melissa

Website: Brad has added what we previously discussed to the website. Brad will continue to work on the webpage. Committee members were happy with what Brad, Duncan and others who worked on the website have accomplished.

Wildlife Management Plan: No updates, but Brad has filled in outline. Has made summary and it could be in appendix to management plan due to length. Hopefully Sam and Chase will be able to meet soon with Brad.

VELCO update from Wright. Wright and Brad met at ACF with Ally, Marina and Jacob from VELCO

Here's Wright's summary of the discussion:

- The 25' ROW utility road easement will include a sentence or two about the ROW access not interfering with the Town's small parking area at the base of the ROW near Rte. 2. (Do you want to draft that sentence or two?)

- VELCO will install two parallel split rail fence sections on the east side of the concrete abutments, one section just above the abutments and one set nearer the top of the side road hill. VELCO will install "danger signs" on the posts.

- VELCO's insurance agent (H&B) will provide the Town with a certificate of insurance naming the Town as additionally insured for this section of the VELCO utility easement.

- We then discussed VELCO's, GMP's and their contractor's use of the old E - W VAST Trail, that is north of the two utility easements. I asked that the utilities stop using this E-W trail. VELCO staff indicated that they need this E-W access for ATV and UTV access linking Valley View lands and ACF lands. I shared that the utility AVT and UTV users are causing damage to the water bars installed by VYCC a few years back, and the trail is now washing out. VELCO said it would talk to its operators. VELCO will increase the ROW road fee payable to the town from \$8K (is that what was offered?). The sum will increase by \$2,500, with the purpose of the proceeds to make ongoing water bar repairs to this section of the trail.

- We spoke briefly about the old stone culvert on the eastern section of the of the Old VAST Trail. This culvert is washing away, and it needs repair. VELCO and the utilities use this section of of the Old VAST Trail to access power poles on the Maple Wind Farm. VELCO and the Town agree that this culvert needs to be improved.

- We spoke briefly about having Maple Wind Farm provided with an access ROW up the utility road in exchange for releasing its ROW up the old farm road. VELCO could support that plan.

Management plan revisions and timeline: Daniel has gone through whole management plan and will offer a suite of tasks that the committee can choose from. At a minimum, we want to continue the things we have already done. Rewritten recreation section will need to be revisited. Currently reflects previous trail plan. Would like to make table of management goals and tasks, as they are currently not aligned. Table needed to list action items and contact/point person. Could pull from UVM and previous studies to discuss specifics as well as the current general info. We talked about this this using the generalized cliff info included in the management plan as an example. We could add action steps and current work.

Bob's Maps: All layers are combined on Bob's maps as well as separated out into different issues. We looked at the Vermont ANR map. Wright: ANR Conservation Design Priority map: North/South trail looks very difficult while looking at this map, perhaps it could be East/West for connectivity. How can we compromise? We can't get a north/south trail in a non-priority zone. Daniel: looking at connectivity piece - area to the east that connects to the VYCC on existing woods road might be a possibility. Could we have connectivity to VYCC? Look again at south of the VELCO line to have a universal design approaching what would be an accessible path? Committee members have been reviewing Meredith McNaughton literature. We have opportunity to have a greater diversity of trails. With right type of building something that offers more accessibility is an idea.

Future meeting scheduled: July 22nd, Aug 26th, 2024