

Royalton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2018

Welcome/Introductions

Members: Brad Salzman, Tico Wolff, Hoyt Bingham, Mike Bald, Bushrod Powers, Ian MacKenzie,

Members absent: David Barker with regrets

Visitor: Noel Dodge, Fish & Wildlife Dept., Regulatory Reviewer, Sarnoff Property, Deer Wintering Habitat

Call to Order: 6:35 pm

Sarnoff Property: Deer Wintering Habitat: Noel Dodge

- Noel Dodge, Regulatory Review Biologist for State of Vermont. Presenting information regarding proposed solar project at the Bethel-Royalton Transfer Station. Discussed that the developer and project are currently working through ACT 248 permitting process.
- Proposed Solar project at transfer station includes impact of 0.8 acres of deer wintering area. Solar project developer is requesting to off-set (mitigate) the deer wintering area impact by conserving deer wintering area on the Sarnoff property. The solar developer is offering to pay for the land management plan updating of the Sarnoff property and to include the mitigation effort of the solar project by restricting recreational use of a portion of the Sarnoff property during the winter.
- Note: there was confusion of the exact amount of land described to be restricted for recreational use during the winter months. Follow-up will be required to clarify the amount of land to be restricted. The Royalton Conservation Commission (RCC) was planning to further investigate this land for recreation use during the winter and would like to not give away the potential for winter recreation use at this time.
- Noel described that the solar project developer's alternate option for mitigating the impact at the transfer station would be to obtain a permanent easement on other deer wintering areas, which would cause additional costs to the solar project.
- Discussion and understanding the on-site mitigation requires a 2:1 ratio for conserved deer wintering area to impacted deer wintering area. Discussion and understanding that off-site mitigation requires a 4:1 ratio for conserved deer wintering area to impacted deer wintering area.
- Some discussion regarding the intended work by AJ, County Forester, for updating forestry assessment and then getting recommendations for tweaks with few things on plan.
- Discussion that AJ, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission and Selectboard would all need to sign off on any land management plan amendments. Noel Dodge would oversee.
- Discussion that Sam Carlson, Green Lantern Solar, the developer, met with SR planning board and there was no opposition to winter recreation restrictions on the Sarnoff property.
- Discussion of the ACT 248 process and conditions for permitting by solar developer. Discussed that plan will be signed off by Town Selectboard, Planning and Conservation committees.
- Noel discussed F&W would like to have NO winter recreation (from December through Spring?) Discussed winter biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing causes more impact to deer population during the winter than snowmobiling due to low noise and the nature of startling the deer while crosscountry skiing, winter biking or snowshoeing.
- Some discussion that Recreation may be allowable on railroad bed trail only.
- Discussion that a request to the developer may include having the developer pay for any signage required to properly sign a potential conserved deer wintering area and provide updated signage through the life of the conservation agreement.

- Noel discussed the project construction is anticipated for Summer 2018. RCC discussed that an on-site review in April should be planned to prepare for review of an updated land management plan.
- Noel and RCC discussed that the developer is already working on the land management plan. RCC discussed that at this point if the updating of the land management plan is in progress, we will await the draft to see what the plan says.
- RCC discussed process, Selectboard and Planning board did not consult RCC. Discussion RCC needs to follow-up/report more to other boards.
- RCC will reach out to the Selectboard and planning board that we would like to review the plan before it is accepted.
- We would like to walk the Sarnoff property when it is walked by AJ, Windsor County Forester, Noel Dodge, Fish & Wildlife, State of Vermont, and/or developer Green Lattern Solar. We ask all the parties to let us know when that will be happening.

Approval of Minutes (January 15, 2018): accepted as written

Events:

VT COVERTS Cooperator Training:	May 11-13, Starksboro, Sept. 7-9, Hydeville
Feb. 24	9:00 am Hemlock Wooley Adeligid Monitoring-Woodstock
March 3	10:00 am Climate Change – Woodstock
March 8	7:00 pm Rattlesnakes in VT – Rutland
March 8	7:00 pm Cabin Fever Lecture Series – Middlebury
March 10	Wildlife Walk – Middlebury
March 24	Marsh Monitoring Walk – W. Rutland
Morrill Homestead Education Center	March 17 & 24 Pruning & Grafting Fruit Trees - Strafford
WRP/VLS	Sept. 9 2:00 pm (tentative) River Clean-up Day

Town Meeting, March 6, 2018

Green Up day: Ian will make an announcement promoting Green Up Day working together with Royalton Recreation

Thaw Day, Friday, March 9 (on the green) 5-9pm We will not have a table with information this year.

AVCC Tiny Grant

Apply for grant to connect/meet with Bethel Conservation Commission.

Mary Floyd, chairperson for Bethel Conservation Commission.

Begin planning with recreation activities.

Goals & Interests:

Sarnoff property/Royalton Town Forest: Implement 2004 Land Management Plan

Crawford property: Assessment by county forester. Brad will contact Allen Fallensbee re: timing

Green Up Day: 5/5/18, we will help out on that day. Brad to contact VLS.

White River Access Stewardship: we will participate in the September River Clean Up

New Business:

VT River Conservancy-Pinch Rock access maintenance
VOREC
Outdoor recreation friendly town.

Next meeting date/time:

March 19, 2018 @ 6:30 pm

Adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hoyt Bingham

Royalton Conservation Commission Clerk

APPROVED