

**Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee
Minutes**

Thursday, November 15, 2018 – Lowell Town Office, Lowell

Attendees: Leanne Barnard, Jacques Couture, Ellen Fox, John Little, Jim MacCartney, Cynthia Scott, Wendy Scott, and Lindsey Wight

Meeting called to order at 6:38 pm. Leanne agreed to be our secretary for this meeting – thank you Leanne!

Minutes of the September 20th and October 18th meeting were reviewed. JL motioned; EF seconded approving the September minutes. JL motioned; LB seconded approving the October minutes. Both minutes were approved as written.

Administrative Business:

The Bonfire Along the River on November 4th was enjoyed by the attendees. We had approximately 25 folks. Blue Fox played acoustic guitar; we paid him \$200 and it was well worth it. It was chilly, and most attendees departed after an hour (consider this for future events?). A Richford resident who has property along the river called Lindsey after the event and expressed interest in hosting a bonfire on his land. Perhaps next year?

Westfield access point – Jenevra and Lindsey got the steps pulled just before the big rain! They're safe and sound on the bank for winter, and Lindsey will get a cable and lock to keep them secure and to avoid potential vandalism.

Cynthia went over our 2018 3rd quarter financial report (this was the final quarter for the federal fiscal year). It was posed that perhaps we should get a debit or credit card for purchases – Lindsey currently carries those on her personal account and get reimbursed for expenses. Having a Committee card could be good for transparency, but Lindsey is happy with the current system and keeps receipts of her costs.

Uniform allowance – we will have a condensed calendar of items that Committee members may order available in December. Lindsey brought a second round of hats – let her know if you have not received one.

Projects:

Professional photo and drone videos – Lindsey showed off the second set of professional photos that we have contracted for; these beautiful photos from Riverwalk Park will be used for marketing, and as a prompt for people to enter photo contest. Contest details: photos will be used for marketing, calendar, websites, etc. Winners will get gift card to a local business (Details TBD). Roguen will get some winter shots with the drone as well – suggested that he try to get some of icy falls, a covered bridge, and some with frost and steam rising from the river. Lindsey will see if she can put these on the Interagency Council's Flickr, which is public domain.

Storybook: discussion about the purpose/energy behind a storybook effort. What is the end goal/who is the target audience? Will it have an impact/make a difference? Is it the best use of our dollars to achieve outreach? How about a series of shorter collections (i.e. "Missisquoi Macroinvertebrates")? Seek creative ideas with a Request for Proposals (RFP) that contains our available funds ("not to exceed") and our requirements. Purpose of the book: to educate readers about the rivers. Require certain age group - older youths/pre-teens – or have applicants select a (pre?) defined age group of their own choosing? "Guidebook geared toward kids" or "Adventure story with field guide". Author and Committee will have equal rights to any publication. Require writing sample. Lindsey will create a draft RFP and send it around to the Committee for questions/suggestions.

Winter projects: Lindsey will work with Noah to create the online interactive and printable pdf maps for paddlers and sightseers.

Road sign formatting has been approved; we will get those printed and offer them to towns for river crossings on town roads. Road crews will install.

Sampsonville Dam access: Noah has spoken to the landowner, who would be open to public access but wants users to make contact before fishing, canoeing, etc. Owner does not favor an easement, so this access point will require more investigation into feasibility. Discussion ensued about what the costs and legalities are for gaining an easement, including acquisition, who holds the easement, fair market values, appraisal and survey costs, etc. It was suggested that we invite a member of the VT Land Trust to attend a meeting to educate us more about this issue – i.e. what is the difference between an easement and a right of way? What is the process? What are estimated costs? Lindsey will reach out to set this up.

Enosburg Falls Dam Re-licensing meeting: The Enosburg Dam is seeking a 50 year re-licensing; the current license expires in 2022. The recent meeting was well attended by folks with recreation and natural resources concerns, including several of our own folks. Groups are allowed to request studies – for water quality concerns, recreation, fish passage, peak demand usage (current usage is run of river, where inflow=outflow). The meeting was positive overall – agreement that we don't want to do studies just to do the studies; if the information is already out there, then we can forge ahead without a new study. Something we can provide are numbers to help justify access and usage of river.

River Community Grants: We have closed out several of our 10 grants, including the Encore West canoe trip, Northern Forest Explorers canoe trip, Paddle/Pedal, and Richford Beautification. Lindsey will follow up with groups who still have ongoing grant projects. We should publicize about the 2018 grant projects – get stories in papers, etc.

For 2019, we budgeted \$20,000. Last year we gave 10 grants totaling \$30,000. Up the total? Yes, let's use some rollover funds and bring the grants funding to \$60,000. Discussion of raising the \$5000 cap to consider other options – such as mitigation projects, culvert projects that have larger funding needs and longer timelines. Lindsey will alter our existing RFP to reflect that we have funds (\$40,000?) for projects up to \$5,000, and that we are also interested in larger projects up to \$10,000 – these larger projects will require match and leveraging of funds. Also note that the Committee will entertain out-of-cycle proposals for larger dollar amount projects that exceed our cap.

2019 event planning: held until the December meeting

Upcoming events: December 20 – Solstice Potluck, at Richford High School 6:30-8:30. Community invited; we will have a limited agenda, but this will be in place of our typical meeting.

Other/Public Comment: Funding concerns - need to be sure we are using our funds annually and not leaving them in the federal system.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 20 – Richford (Solstice Potluck)

January 17 – Westfield

February 21 – Montgomery?

Wrap up and adjourn: WS motioned, LB seconded, all in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:47. Thank you all for staying late and accomplishing so much!