

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee
Minutes
Thursday, May 16, 2019 – Lowell Town Office

Attendees: Sue Brassett, Jacques Couture, Russ Ford, Ellen Fox, Carol Hickey, Mark Higley, John Little, Jim McCartney, Jeff Parsons, Dan Seeley, Wendy Scott, Haley Pero, and Lindsey Wight

Meeting called to order at 6:35pm. Carol was our secretary for this meeting – thank you Carol!

Minutes of the **April 18th** meeting were reviewed. DS motioned; JL seconded; minutes approved.

Administrative Business:

We will have a new ECO AmeriCorps member beginning September.

River Community Grants: GMC applied for a \$10,000 grant for a privy at Journey's End. Weaknesses of the application included no link to our ORV's, however they are a strong organization doing a lot of good for conservation in our region – great partner. We would like for them to add a (durable) Wild and Scenic plaque (or include a map of our rivers, or at least our website as a place to go for more info?) in the privy design, and write an article in GMC newsletter. CH motioned/SB seconded; approved.

A Trustee from the Richford Library asked for funding for their lunch fundraiser at the June 22 Paddle/Pedal. EF motioned we fund \$500/Russ seconded; motion passed.

North Troy Village applied for \$5,000 grant to clean out debris. The application mentioned water quality but was light on other details/required information. Lindsey sent some follow-up questions (such as: is there anything that can be done so that this reoccurring problem can be prevented? How often is this cleaning done? How is it usually funded?); we will wait for more information before moving forward on this grant application.

John Little reported that visiting the selectboards has gone well. There was a good suggestion that we include Lowell in the circuit.

Purchases: big event tent for \$700-800, ~20x30 foot: WS motioned/DS seconded; passed. T-shirt: discussed options - UMATR definition, but simplified; fewer words and large logo, with map on the back. What about locating it within VT - outline of the state of Vermont with a map of wild and scenic within that? Lindsey will send around options. The turbidity meter was \$800 and works well – thank you! Great suggestions that we offer school teacher trainings on using it, then they can request to borrow for their classes. Go Pro for the sojourn will be ordered soon and will enable us to not only record the Sojourn, but also have baseline data for the rivers as of 2019. Discussion of GoPro techniques with several knowledgeable Committee members was very helpful; thank you all!

Game camera: great discussion from many Committee members with experience with these, as well; thank you again for sharing your knowledge. We would use to monitor access points – need to put sign of ownership/lock. Could be placed between two access points to track river-use. Would also be cool to see wildlife use (Jeff said the Lowell/Westfield line access point is a big bobcat crossing – side concern: will creating an access affect them?). Suggested camera brands/types: Reconyx run \$500-800 each. Lesser model, good for tracking human traffic, can run \$200 (plus cable, SD card, batteries, etc.). WS motions to purchase two game cameras at mid-price range, DS seconded; motion passed.

Drone: additional (spring) footage was taken at Big Falls and in Richford. YouTube channel is "UMATR".

River Rally: 6/21-6/24. No one can go and it conflicts with the Paddle Pedal. We will plan to go next year.

Contractor Versus Employee: Lindsey is researching become an employee of the MRBA.

Budget: Discussed the FY 2020 Budget proposal. Key points of discussion included: Bugworks (potentially could be funded through other sources); grants are being reduced for next year; if our office situation were to change, our rent budget would change (we have a good deal right now).

RF motioned to accept the budget as proposed; SB seconded; budget passed.

Next time we are discussing the budget, it would be good to have the previous years' numbers for comparison.

Projects:

North Troy: Survey has been put out online; 38 responses so far. Still need to do community meeting/café to see what people want to see happen with the land.

Westfield bank stabilization: moving forward with the plan – machine-work followed by plants and trees. Love Your Park additional NPF grant opportunity- \$5,000 to help increase the visibility and connect with more volunteers.

Poison Ivy Big Falls: need to get Parks and Rec on board, talk to Extension service.

Longley Bridge: \$350,000 received by the Town for this project; design this year, work next year; additional bank erosion problem just downstream as well – maybe we can help identify funds for this, too.

Access Point: NFCT crew will be coming in June to put in stone steps at the big pullout on Route 100 at the Westfield/Lowell line; other desired access points include the Loop Rd crossing (upstream, river right), and Sampsonville.

Subcommittees: Some exist, some we need to form

1. Planning: SB, MMc, CH, SW
2. Grants: SB, RF, CH
3. W&S Film Fest – need to select films by August 1: RF, WS, JC, JL, JP
4. Wild and Scenic Gathering (8/18): SB, CS?, JC, WS?, MMc?
5. Mapping: RF, JL, WS, JP for technical assistance
6. River Explorers scholarships: \$3000 for the kids, Wendy will help LW and JW
7. Landowner connections/river access/easements

Other: Haley is the point of contact for several federal resources (Healthy Communities, NRBC); she and Lindsey will discuss ways that these could potentially assist our efforts.

What do towns do with the debris that they sweep of the streets in the spring?

Meeting adjourned 8:29 RF/DS seconded.