

Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee Minutes
Thursday, September 16, 2021 – Berkshire Town Hall

Attendees: Carol Hickey, Russ Ford, Mike Manahan, Dan Seeley, and Lindsey Wight; Jim MacCartney, Bethany Remmers, Cynthia Scott, and Wendy Scott joined via zoom.

Review of the August minutes: DS motioned to accept the minutes; CH seconded; minutes were approved as written.

Budget check-in: MRBA is considering bringing on another part-time person who is focused on administrative and communication tasks; seems to also be a UMATR need – both of these tasks could use more hours and efforts. Better marketing for our events would likely result in better turn-out. Thinking 10-20 hours/week; keeping it flexible for the people who might apply (it would be a remote position). A concern: 10 hours is not a lot, so we wouldn't be likely to get anyone who is looking to make this their primary job. Lindsey needs to dive into budgets for both groups and see what we can afford. She will update UMATR in October.

John Cote is no longer going to sell real estate out of our office space, so we will need to pick up the internet fees that he has been covering for his business – estimate is \$88/month. Lindsey (again) still needs to find this in our budget (where it will sit), but we have agreed to this (need internet!). He is also asking if we can increase the rent we pay, as he will no longer be making money off of the building himself – his estimated monthly cost for keeping the building is \$716 (we pay \$325 between the two organizations). Options: seek other places to rent – the new Eburg town office in the old Armory may have extra space? Skoozie's (although it's becoming a workout space?). Dick & Pam's lower level (Scott Boyce is the owner)? Worth seeing what is out there – but we could do a stop-gap increase of rent as we search – though we will have to run this past the MRBA Board as well before making any \$ moves. \$550 increase is suggested – WS/CS – and all approved, if the MRBA agrees.

Events review: Montgomery River Clean-Up September 11: lower attendance than some years (7 people), but good reports that there was lower trash, too! A few new people – one of whom is a new resident and was excited to see energy around the swimming holes; always good to reach new faces!

Surveys from Marlana: Troy (covered bridge) – we will be pushing this out digitally, and also sending a postcard to all town residents to help the selectboard poll what it is the town wants them to pursue (covered bridge vs modern highway bridge). Lowell – can also do the same for a survey of Lowell resident, to help us see if the mood has changed at all about W&S designation. Lindsey attended a selectboard meeting; their desires have not change – still happy to not have designation in their town. Need to make a bigger presence in the town – there is a Friends of Lowell Kids (FOLK) festival happening this Saturday – should perhaps get a booth next year; and better figure out how to reach Lowell residents.

River Community and Town Infrastructure Grants:

- NCSU river trip final report – 5 days, 2 nights. Visited the Nulhegan Education and Cultural Center. Camped at Doe Camp one night (one night in the school).
- LHS old mill study – good town response; likely requesting an extension for the report.
- NFCT Sampsonville – giving up on the contractor quote they had been hoping for; may get an engineer's opinion about removal instead?
- CHC Keeping Track – FEMC will resume work on this this fall.
- Montgomery Conservation Commission – thank you for the pivot approval. Join them for a guided walk in the Town Forest this Saturday (9/18) at 10am

2022 River Community Grant RFP is out! Please help spread the word about our new timeline for this!

2022 Town Infrastructure RFP will be coming out in October.

Other Projects: Sampsonville rapids has rebar sticking out – should we attempt an informal removal of some of this while the water is low, to reduce the hazard it presents?

MRBA has applied for funds to implement the bank stabilization project along the Trout, near Longley Bridge Rd, that D&K is currently working on designing – with some match funds from us; & phase 1B costs that were approved last meeting.

New/additional projects that we should pursue in 2022? Sampsonville dam removal – spur off the work that NFCT will be getting done (instead of an access point?)?

Strategies for engagement from our towns: Attendance and even representation has fallen off; how can we re-engage? Cynthia may be interested in repping for Montgomery; but would like to meet some more of the town before officially stepping into that role. Needs: Richford (need to check-in with Annette), Troy (need to check in with Sherry), North Troy (need to check in with Helene), Enosburg (--possibly Marlana?), Enosburg Falls.

Do a speaker-series (via zoom) as part of our meeting – 20-30 minutes/topic of interest to the Committee and invite others? Suggestions: Sam Perron (trails/invasives), Kiley Briggs (wood turtles). During the study, we had targeted requests to get people involved – target project interests, try to recruit/headhunt for skills that would help the Committee – like conservation design, and marketing. This itself is a marketing thing!

Upcoming Meetings: October 21 in Orleans County?

Other: Dan brought in an example of the historic sign markers that will be going up around Richford, with support from the 2021 River Community Grant.

Wrap up and Adjourn: meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.