

Jericho Underhill Land Trust Annual Meeting – August 1, 2022

Board members present: John Koier, Phyl Newbeck, Lisa Paone, Livy Strong, and Hilaire Thomas

Land trust members (and guests) present: Eric Bishop, Lisa Blumhagen, Nancy Carey, E. Dave Crane, Jan and Siebold deVries, Nathan and Warren Ellison, Barb Frankowski, Franco Gatti, Tom Joslin, Barbie Koier, Carolyn Leighton, Connie Newman, Craig Newman, Eddy Paone, Donna Pratt, John and Julie Schroeder, Kim Spaulding, Loren Strong, Susan Tankersley, and Anna Vaserstein.

The meeting was filmed by MMCTV

Livy Strong introduced the board members. Unfortunately, Michael Lazorchak and Sabina Ernst were unable to attend.

We've had a very busy year. We were involved with the conservation of Mobbs Farm which was a multi-year effort. It is now permanently conserved for recreation and wildlife habitat. We raised \$23,00 for that including \$13,000 from the Kusserow Family Fund. We also received the first funds released from the Jericho Conservation Reserve Fund as well as money from the Vermont Land Trust.

We've never had more than one project in the year, but this year was different. In addition to Mobbs, we conserved the 11-acre Riverside Meadow. That process that took six years and was ready to go when we had barely finished fundraising for Mobbs. We needed \$200,000 and we had only three months to raise it but were able to do so. The meadow has prime agricultural soil. It will remain a hayfield and it is a foreground to the scenic view of Mt. Mansfield. On May 24 we completed the purchase.

Now we're also working on conserving the Davis Farm which is one of the last dairy farms in Jericho. The conservation easement is being worked on and should be ready soon. We need to raise \$50,000 for that.

All our money comes from our membership. Without people becoming members we wouldn't be able to do these things since we don't get funding from the state or either town. When we have a real need, and we seek donations we have been rewarded by a very generous community and we've been able to reach our goals. Livy thanked people for attending our annual meeting and being a supporting community for the land trust.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, Lisa was elected to a three-year term on the board and Michael and Hilaire were re-elected for three-year terms. Hilaire will remain in charge of membership, but Lisa will take over as Treasurer and Livy thanked Hilaire for her years of service.

Hilaire said this year's financial figures are complicated because we started some of our fundraising in 2021 and completed it in 2022. In December of 2021 we had \$130,00 in our checking account and \$318,000 overall. The previous year those numbers were \$76,000 and

\$201,000 respectively. Our total equity is \$1,304,163 which includes \$985,487 in fixed assets. In 2021 we took in \$150,748 and spent \$34,610. Our biggest expense aside from land acquisition was \$11,000 for invasive species removal at Kikas Valley Farm.

John Koier gave the land stewardship report. JULT currently owns, pays taxes and manages almost 800 acres of land in Jericho, Richmond, and Bolton. Michael Brown of Birdseye Consulting is our new consulting forester for Kikas Valley Farm. He has incorporated some bird-friendly practices which were developed in conjunction with Audubon Vermont. We have continued invasive plant removal with Will Dunkling to remove large patches of Japanese barberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose in the woodlands above the farm fields. Last summer we started the federal grant application process to perform riparian stream bank improvement along both sides of the small stream that flows through the recently acquired Ten Acre Pasture which runs along Skunk Hollow Road. The grant was approved, and work should be completed in the fall.

Beavers have returned to Moose Pond at the Wolfrun/Gateway property this year. They dammed up the culvert under the ancient land bridge which is our only access to the northwestern section of the property. This is the first time beavers have attacked the culvert. After cleaning it out several times, we sought the advice of Tyler Brown, the beaver expert at Vermont Fish and Game. We now have a beaver exclusion fencing system to prevent this from happening again. John also walked Wolfrun with Chittenden County Forester, Ethan Tapper, who ensured that we are compliant with our management plan.

Livy introduced Craig Newman of Outreach for Earth Stewardship. Founded in 1989, and based at Shelburne Farms, Outreach for Earth Stewardship's mission is to strengthen respect and understanding for wildlife through education. Newman brought three "ambassadors" for the program: a barred owl, a great horned owl, and a screech owl.