

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – January 3, 2022

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

Livy Strong called the meeting to order at 7:03.

1. Review of minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of December, 2021 were approved.

2. Financial Report

In December we took in \$26,550 consisting of \$5,175 in memberships, \$24,550 in contributions for the Davis Farm (the PayPal contributions are not included in that) and \$86,000 for our new project, the Riverside Meadow. We spent a total of \$2,251 which included \$1,625 for half the appraisal cost for the Davis Farm and \$626 for printing the renewal letter and for additional letterheads and envelopes. We finished the year \$115,044 in the black.

Our total assets are \$1,303,069 consisting of \$985,487 in fixed assets, \$92,025 at New England Federal Credit Union, \$46,195 in our money market account, \$130,405 in our checking account, \$28,569 in Schwab investments, \$11,188 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$9,197 at the Vermont Community Foundation.

3. Membership/fundraising

As of today, we have achieved our fundraising goal for the Davis Farm thanks to two \$500 donations received this morning. Livy believes we should continue to fundraise and ask for \$10,000 rather than \$20,000 from the Jericho Conservation Fund.

This has been a very busy time with membership renewals and an active fundraising effort via Facebook, Mailchimp, and one Front Porch Forum post. Livy said it speaks to the Davis family that we have had such a great response with limited publicity. We made our goal in only 17 days. Another Mailchimp blast will go out tomorrow and Livy will write about the project for our next newsletter. The timeframe has been extended to June.

Livy is waiting for the DRB's decision on the Charron's subdivision plan. Jericho's Zoning Administrator said it has been approved so Livy is planning a fundraising effort for what we will be calling the Riverside Meadow. This is the first time we've had two projects going at the same time. The purchase and sales agreement gives us three months to come up with the \$200,000 cost of the project but Livy believes we have a good head start. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the board agreed to start a challenge grant, saying that we will match \$25,000 raised by the community. We'll use our reserves to match the funds.

Michael believes that since so much money has already been raised, we would be a good candidate for a grant. We won't be able to get a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board because we don't fit their timeline or guidelines.

4. Land Stewardship

John said we are still working on grants for the Kikas Valley Farm stream renovation and for invasive Japanese knotweed removal. The grant applications have already been submitted but we don't know when we'll hear back.

Normal Blades told Livy that beavers have been active on the wetland portion of Kikas Valley Pasture. That is actually helpful for the cows since the land has been dry as of late.

Sabina has not seen any illegal tree stands this year but has recently heard some gun shots. She suggested that we should be talking to Paul Mazza about some of the stream protection issues that have been raised. She is hoping that Danny Peet can be the go-between.

5. Land Projects

Livy said the draft conservation easement for Mobbs is still being looked at by the town attorney. Bob Heiser initially thought it would be completed at the end of last year. At the time, Livy thought it would be finished earlier but that is clearly not the case. We are supporting the Mobbs effort with \$10,000 of our money, as well as \$13,000 from a donor but we will hold onto that until closing.

Livy reached out to Gary Irish who thought the original Brown family cabin had been on the Riverside Meadow. She will walk the property with Gary to see if they can figure out where the cabin was. Gary thinks he can get Livy to within 150 feet of where the cabin stood. An archeological investigation would be needed for confirmation but we probably won't do that.

6. Publicity

Diana has been handling Mailchimp based on text and photos provided by Livy. We will need to update our website to feature Riverside Meadow.

7. Event ideas

Livy has reached out to Michele Tulis for the annual wildflower walk and Evergreen Erb for the annual bird walk. Evergreen wants Sabina to assist her. May 14 is a possible date for the bird walk. Diana has offered to do a spring wildflower brochure. In the summer Cathy Parris and Dave Barrington will lead a fern walk which will be our first.

Last year we did a zoom annual meeting with Ethan Tapper. Livy asked the board to think about possible presenters and whether we should have this via zoom or in person. Suggestions included return visits by Craig Newman of Earth Outreach Stewardship or Nancy Carey, or possibly Allaire Diamond. Lisa suggested having an event centered around the pond at Mills Riverside

Park and Livy told a story about rescuing some perch that had jumped the banks. Sabina suggested talking to Fish and Wildlife for that kind of event. Other thoughts were North Branch Nature Center or VINS.

8. Community news

Phyl noted that the Third History of Jericho is available in area stores.

Livy said both Jericho and Underhill Select Boards have opted not to have a mask mandate. The two Select Boards are meeting together more often which she believes is a good sign.

John and/or Livy will walk with Steven Schwartz of the Trails Committee in the spring to determine the placement of the new kiosk at Wolfrun Natural Area.

Sabina suggested putting a sign with a QR code leading to our website at the split rail fence at the parking area of Kikas Valley Farm.

Sabina had the folks from the Intervale at her property dealing with invasive buckthorn. That crew will come back to Kikas Valley Farm in March.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00

Respectfully submitted,
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary