

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – November 5, 2023

Board members present: John Connell, John Koier, Michael Lazorchak, Phyl Newbeck, and Livy Strong

Guest: Dan Boomhower of Williston

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:00.

1. Review of minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of September and October (the annual meeting) 2023 were approved.

2. Financial report

Lisa Paone wasn't available for the meeting so there was no financial report.

3. Membership and year-end giving

Livy said Lisa has printed all the thank you letters. This is the time of year when we solicit membership renewals and year-end donations.

4. Land stewardship

John reported that he walked Kikas Valley Farm with Danny Peet of NRCS and Dave Adams of the Farm Service Agency and filled out an application for EQIP which may free some monetary assistance for help with both invasive plant work and the creation of bird and wildlife habitat on the Kikas Valley Farm woodlands. EQIP funding grants have become much more competitive over the last few years, so it will be advantageous for us to fine tune our management plan with some input from the folks at Audubon Vermont. Dan said that if you can combine more than one use for the land, you are more likely to get EQIP funding.

There is no update on the Kikas Valley pasture and John believes the work will be done in the spring. Phyl noted that she saw Bob Naylor with a surveyor on his property which abuts the pasture area.

5. Land projects

We have an application before the Jericho Conservation Commission for \$35,000 to help pay for the conservation of the Davis Farm. We have already received money from the fund for two previous projects. We need the extra funds because the cost of the project went up subsequent to a second appraisal. Livy is confident we'll get the funding. The Conservation Commission meets on November 15 via Zoom.

The 52-acre Farm Upstream was conserved in early September. Livy would like to have a meal with the farmers and was thinking about something simple and early in the day like JP's Diner on Route 117. The landowner, Martha Prince, would also be invited.

6. Publicity

Livy asked for assistance in removing the lawn signs this week. John Connell volunteered to help. Livy has gotten a lot of positive feedback from the signs which show that the land has been conserved forever. We had them up in June and October, but one may have been the victim of haying equipment at Tomasi Meadow.

7. Events

John Connell suggested growing our board with high school students because they are being bombarded with negative news. We are doing something to push back against the decay of the land. Even if we don't add anyone new to the board, we should do things for/with the local schools to show there is hope. Livy said that David Marlow heads up Student Activities at MMU and the biology teachers at BRMS have worked on service projects with us. Livy will send John the contacts so he can try and set something up. Phyl suggested reaching out to Anton Kelsey at MMU. John would also like to see us extend membership to students.

8. Community News

Wayne Howe resigned from the Jericho Selectboard and Joe Flynn was chosen to take his place.

The Jericho Energy Task Force hosted a Repair Café in late October. There were 11 volunteers and roughly 20 people who took advantage of their expertise repairing clothes, sewing machines, and other electronic and mechanical devices, and sharpening knives.

Michael reported that Stowe Electric just did the largest single window insert in Vermont. Window Dressers is a non-profit out of Maine that builds high efficiency pine inserts to increase the R value of windows. They are roughly \$30 per insert but they pay for themselves in two winter heating seasons. The catch is you need volunteers to assemble and insert the windows.

The Underhill Food Shed is closed for the season and John Connell is making wooden hearts for people to hang on their trees or doors. John Koier is making bird houses and will dedicate a few to Mills Riverside Park.

Dan Boomhower described negotiations with the Vermont Land Trust regarding his land which has led him to think that Williston should create its own land trust. Livy noted that Williston has a very active Conservation Commission and a large conservation fund.

The meeting concluded at 7:45

Respectfully submitted,
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary