

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – March 4, 2024

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

Guests: Sheryl Leslie, Wendy Verrei-Berenback (left at 7:05), Randi Roy, and Brian Walsh (left at 7:05)

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:00.

1. Review of minutes.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of February 2024 were approved.

2. Vote on relinquishing our efforts for a State Marker to recognize the Brown family's original cabin at Riverside Meadow.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the board voted to relinquish our efforts to place a State Marker to recognize the Brown family's original cabin at Riverside Meadow.

3. Financial report.

Lisa provided the financial report prior to the meeting. Our total assets are \$1,376,710 consisting of \$1,187,502 in fixed assets, \$5,036 (one-year term) and \$88,619 (two-year term) at New England Federal Credit Union, \$11,205 in our money market account, \$88,619 in our checking account, \$28,932 in Schwab investments, \$11,528 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$8,896 at the Vermont Community Foundation.

In February we took in \$7,334 in memberships and received a \$551 grant from CREP for Kikas Valley Farm. We spent \$313 consisting of \$45 for office expenses, \$1,500 for printing, \$69 for a wheelbarrow gifted to The Farm Upstream, \$169 in Wolfrun Natural Area property taxes, and \$30 for subscriptions.

4. Vote to remove Hilaire Thomas's name from the Community Bank signature card and add Sheryl Leslie as Financial Secretary.

Hilaire Thomas' name was on the signature card, and we need to change that since she has resigned from the board. Sheryl Leslie has been helping Lisa out. She will be named Financial Secretary, and her name will be added to the card. Sheryl said her role is to advise and coach Lisa on the financial aspects of the board. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the board voted to remove Hilaire's name from the signature card and add Sheryl's name. Livy, Lisa, and Phyl will also have to sign the signature card.

5. Legal Matters

Michael was unavailable for the discussion, but Livy said our lawyer had a conversation with David Demarest's lawyer, and he will probably not be appealing the decision against him. This

will save us the \$3,000 retainer fee. Our case was separated from the various other lawsuits filed by Demarest. We have already paid \$5,000 in legal fees. Livy praised Michael for having assisted while his father was having open heart surgery.

6. Land Stewardship

John Koier reported that his hip surgery recovery is on a good course, and he is looking forward to getting back on the landscape in person.

John continues to work with Dave Adams of Vermont Fish and Wildlife and our forester Michael Brown to finetune the Kikas Valley Farm forest management plans to reflect habitat improvements to benefit woodland songbirds. Michael has promised to have these changes completed by April 1. This all about getting a CREP grant to further our plans to continue our Japanese barberry control and timber stand improvement work according to the current forest management plan.

John and Livy had a meeting with Randi Roy. She is working on her GIS certification and has offered her services to help with mapping and organizing our land stewardship files and records so that they may be both accessible and in one convenient place. She has offered to help us create display material for our newly donated kiosk at Kikas Valley Farm. We were approached by Kevin Unrath who lives in the Wingate development about doing some much needed trail improvement/maintenance at KVF. We eagerly accepted his offer.

As spring approaches, our eyes will be on Paul Mazza's farming operation regarding soil erosion at Kikas Valley Farm. John just learned that Danny Peet retired from NRCS and has been replaced by Ria Kobernuss. We will miss Danny's familiarity with local farming operations such as the Mazza operation and his friendly personality.

Sabina believes that CREP will be doing some riparian restoration work this spring on her property, planting native shrubbery. Livy said that we should know by April if the Blades will be bringing their cows back. Bob Naylor offered to seek another tenant for that pasture. The problem is that the fencing is in bad shape. Sabina suggested reaching out to the Association of Grassland Farmers or NOFA rather than have a random Front Porch Forum post and the board agreed with that idea.

7. Events.

We will be having a spring wildflower walk on May 4 and our annual bird walk on May 11. Sabina will lead the walk, but Evergreen Erb has a bad hip and will lead a more sedentary event with tripods, cameras, and binoculars next to the Browns River. Sabina is looking for a co-leader and Grace Nelson is a possibility if she is in town.

8. Publicity.

Livy is working on the spring newsletter. We are making some progress on the website although there is more work to be done. Livy is hoping we can have a booth at the Farmers' Market once a

month over the summer. We received at least one membership as a result of our appearance there last year. Lisa offered to help staff the booth.

9. Community News.

Underhill will be voting at Town Meeting on providing more money to help the Farmers' Market.

Our next meeting will be April 1 via Zoom.

The meeting concluded at 7:30

Respectfully submitted,
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary