

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – October 7, 2024

Board members present: John Connell, John Koier, Phyl Newbeck (by phone), and Livy Strong

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:07.

1. Review of minutes

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

2. Financial report

Lisa provided the financial report prior to the meeting. Our total assets are \$1,383,312 consisting of \$1,187,502 in fixed assets, \$93,996 at New England Federal Credit Union, \$11,207 in our money market account, \$39,698 in our checking account, \$28,932 in Schwab investments, \$11,615 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$9,601 at the Vermont Community Foundation. We only have one CD now and it has a higher interest rate.

In September we took in \$1,381 in memberships and \$759 in dividends. We spent \$250 for accounting, \$840 in Kikas Valley Farm property taxes, \$45 for administrative expenses, \$612 in Riverside Meadow property taxes and \$37 for subscriptions.

Our December meeting will be via Zoom, and we will talk with Sheryl Leslie about the two funds that we have and decide whether we need to withdraw a little or everything from one or both.

3. Membership/fundraising

We are getting into our year end giving period. Livy will be writing a letter which will go out to all members asking people to renew their membership. We have roughly 230 members and that number has been pretty stable. The growth that we have had is all project based.

John Connell wants to engage younger families. He called a number of similar non-profits, and none seemed to have a plan for engaging. He talked about possibly creating a membership level for kids or a club. Livy talked about reaching out to younger farmers like the ones at the Farm Upstream. She suggested that we talk to our friends and neighbors about JULT since many people don't know what we do or think that we are funded by the town. Livy talked to a lot of people at the farmers' market this year, but she doesn't think any of them became members. She has talked to the Youth Librarian at Deborah Rawson Memorial Library and hopes we can combine with some events. Likewise, she noted that there are events with children at Jericho Ale and Bean and Bernie Paquette reaches younger people with his Jericho Families in Nature.

Livy said the signs saying that certain pieces of land are conserved were a surprise to people and might boost membership.

4. Land stewardship

John Koier provided the stewardship report. He said that thanks to our reimbursement grant through the NRCS, Dennis Bianco has finished 60 additional acres of removal of invasive plants in the Kikas Valley Farm woodlands including Japanese barberry, common buckthorn, multiflora rose and honeysuckle. He started on September 21 and finished on October 4. He is sending his report to Dave Adams who should make a site visit in the next two weeks to release the grant money to us. John Koier said he enjoyed working with Bianco

There are still a number of acres on the Kikas Valley Farm Overlook that haven't been treated. John will apply for another grant for next season to, hopefully, complete the whole property. Meanwhile, Bill Anderson of the VYCC will make a site visit next week to the 20-acre timber stand/habitat improvement project at KVF with our forester Michael Brown to plan the implementation of this project over the winter.

5. Events

Our Annual Meeting is November 11 at the Jericho Community Center. Phyl noted that she, Livy, John Koier, and Sabina are at the end of their three-year terms. Additionally, last year we neglected to officially elect John Connell to the board, so he is also up for reelection. Michael and Lisa's terms extend to next year. Wetlands biologist for Vermont Land Trust (and Jericho resident and Conservation Commission member) Allaire Diamond will present a talk about what beavers teach us. Livy has started advertising the event on Facebook and Front Porch Forum. We will meet at 6:00 and the refreshments will start at 6:30. Phyl will bring cider, John Koier will bring cheese, and John Connell will bring cookies. The business meeting will start at 7:00 and will take no more than 15 or 20 minutes.

Cathy Paris offered to do a winter tree walk for us. We'll probably do a Saturday morning after Christmas,

6. Community news

Phyl said Jericho has a new Town Planner who spent the last 23 years as a planner in DC. He appears to have an interest in pedestrians and parks.

John Koier said the potato harvest was a great success. John Connell said the food sharing shelf is still going strong.

Livy went to Jericho's Town Meeting Reimagined kick-off meeting on Saturday morning at Mount Mansfield Union High School. There were seven tables for displays. There were 40 to 50 people in attendance, and they broke up into groups brainstorming what the Jericho budget should look like. The draft budget will be ready for a meeting on January 23 so people can review the items. There is also talk about expanding the Select Board to five, something Underhill has already done.

The meeting concluded at 7:48

Respectfully submitted,

Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary