

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – January 6, 2024

Board members present via Zoom: John Connell, Sabina Ernst, John Koier, Michael Lazorchak, Phyl Newbeck, Lisa Paone, and Livy Strong

Guest: Sheryl Leslie

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:01.

1. Review of minutes

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

2. Financial report

Our total assets are \$1,395,597 consisting of \$1,187,502 in fixed assets, \$93,996 at New England Federal Credit Union, \$11,208 in our money market account, \$51,162 in our checking account, \$29,720 in Schwab investments, \$11,702 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$10,305 at the Vermont Community Foundation. Sheryl suggested that we consolidate some of our accounts, noting that we should probably keep a minimum amount in our checking account and move the rest to the Schwab account, as well as liquidate the CD when it is due. Phyl asked that we keep some money in the Vermont Community Foundation because they do good work investing the funds that are held there. We have already consolidated two accounts. Livy asked Sheryl for her ideas on how to start the process. Livy will take her ideas for the board to vote on,

In December we took in \$10,301 consisting of \$10,175 in memberships and \$125 in interest. We spent \$1,469 including \$167 in account fees, \$125 in accounting, \$646 got advertising, \$381 for Kikas Valley Farm expenses, \$45 in administrative expenses, \$90 for other business expenses, and \$37 for subscriptions.

We finished the year with roughly \$30,000 in net income. Lisa now has access to update MailChimp but Diana Dunn will continue to send out those emails.

3. Membership/Fundraising

We received just over 100 membership donations totaling over \$10,301. There was one \$1,000 donation, one for \$750, four for \$500, three for \$250, and three for \$200. Only one was a new member.

4. Land Stewardship

Sabina shared that funding for planting along the northern stream of the Kikas Valley Farm property was approved by Friends of the Winooski River. We have funds to plant 600 bare root trees and shrubs along with 500 live stake trees in the spring of 2025. We also have funding through 2027 to do maintenance work twice per year. They have sent us MOUs to sign. This will be along the same stream where we planted trees in April on the farm side of the property. That will help improve the buffer to the stream.

John Koier finally got a firm commitment and date for the upland bird habitat and timber stand improvement on a 25-acre project at Kikas Valley Farm. There would be some crop tree releases to let in sunlight. Bill Anderson of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps has committed to doing this work in November/December of 2025. However, upon reviewing what Natural Resource Conservation Service will reimburse us for this work John believes the VYCC option may be unaffordable. Sabina thinks that Will Dunklee might be able to do the work for less.

Livy and Michael discussed some potential projects for UVM students, and one was for riverbank improvements along the Browns River at Mills Riverside Park. On the 16th, Livy will go to UVM to try to interest students in the project. Michael said we can expect to have a student group to work with.

5. Land projects

Livy was asked to attend an Underhill Select Board meeting to advocate for the addition of 22 acres to the Underhill Town Forest. The Select Board approved it. The parcel is landlocked and has a spectacular view not far from the Sunset Ridge Trail. Livy said it was the easiest project we've ever done.

6. Publicity

Livy isn't going to write a winter newsletter. Newsletters cost \$700 and we don't have much news so she'd rather wait for spring when we may be able to talk about upcoming projects.

7. Events

We were going to have a winter tree walk but Livy has not been able to nail down a date from Cathy Paris which is another reason for not having a winter newsletter.

8. Community news

Livy said that there will be Food Hub dinner on Wednesday at Browns River Middle School. She will help by doing the prep for the Shepard's pie. The Farm Upstream farmers are involved with the food hub. Livy would like to dovetail with some of the Food Hub's events.

Phyl said the Jericho Energy Task Force is showing the movie Common Ground about regenerative agriculture on Tuesday night at 7 pm at the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library.

Livy said that on January 23rd there will be a meeting for Jericho Town Meeting Reimagined. It starts at 6 pm and the Masons will provide a spaghetti dinner at 5 pm.

Sabina said that the CCRPC's responsibilities are being restructured through Act 181. Part of the Act 250 restructuring will involve different tiers of usage. Some areas will be off-limits for development, followed by others with different regulations. The CCRPC is talking to each town to figure out how their land use map will look. They are coming to the Jericho Planning

Commission meeting on January 21st to provide an overview. The maps in our town plan were made with these changes in mind. Sabina will send out the future land use map to the board. It's not a zoning map. It says that hypothetically these are areas where we'd like to see growth or no growth. It's aspirational.

The Planning Commission is also looking to revise the Natural Resource Overlay District. There are primary and secondary conservation tiers. What is missing from the overlay map is forest blocks and recent state legislation asks towns to look at things on the forest block level. The Conservation Commission has worked with Arrowwood Consulting to identify our forest blocks. They ranked them according to their value. We can use that to fine-tune the Natural Resource Overlay District.

Phyl and Sabina discussed the petition to have a discussion to expand the Jericho Select Board from three to five people. The petition is available at a number of locations and both of them have copies of it.

9. Bylaw review

It was suggested that people should look at the by-laws independently and contact Phyl if they have any suggested changes.

The meeting concluded at 7:42

Respectfully submitted,
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary