

Bethel Conservation Commission Minutes – 7/15/14

Present Mary Floyd, Moe Brigham, Emily Miller, Tom Warhol, Carl Russell, Mary Russ (White River Partnership)

Action on Minutes minutes approved with slight changes (date)

Business

- Planning for August 7th Public Forum, Mary Russ, Executive Director of the White River Partnership, assisting.
 - Money for ice cream was approved by the selectboard. Mary Floyd will get this from Cockadoodle.
 - Mary Russ gave a quick description of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that are available to cover costs to improve buyout properties:
 - \$750,000 available to design/construct buyout property improvements.
 - Letter of interest was submitted by Keith Arlund on behalf of Bethel (\$49,000 for all 3 properties).
 - Application form to apply for 2014 is due August 30th. There will be another round next year for 2015.
 - Grant has a 10% match requirement. WRP can assist with this 10%.
 - Mary Russ gave a quick overview of a similar public meeting being held in Rochester to discuss re-use of buyout properties on July 24th:
 - will start with site visit, followed by quick presentation on buyouts, handouts about easement restrictions, buyout restrictions, they plan to break into small groups with blank site maps for people to think about options and then come back together as a larger group (this is a format used by the VT River Conservancy).
 - We agreed it would be helpful to have some information about the 4 Bethel buyout properties on the town website (Mary Russ is willing to assist).
 - We discussed the idea that improvements could mean restoring floodplain function, etc. as well as recreational access.
 - Mary Russ will draft a press release for the Herlad and send to Tom for review before submission. We can also use this press release to distribute around town and via Front Porch Forum (Carl is willing to post).
 - Mary Floyd will make sure to invite Alexanders, Feeneys, Hodgons, Mears, Durfees; Tom will cover Gilead folks.
 - Bethel public meeting agenda:
 - 6-6:30 Presentation to include details about properties, next steps, restrictions, timelines, Phase 2 data for those sites (Mary Russ and possibly Rudi Rudell, Redstart);
 - 6:30-7:30 Walk down to Marsh Meadows property;
 - 7:30-8 Ice cream, questions, brainstorming as a group, rather than in small groups.

- Bethel public meeting goals: raise awareness, begin the planning process rather than come up with a finished project.
- Other details:
 - Projector from Dave Sanborn (BRI)
 - Moe will assist with set-up around 5:30.
 - We need to create a form to gather feedback about process (how do people want to be involved?) as well as uses (how should we use the properties?). This might also include a handout about what the CC has been up to (Mary Floyd- take a look at the Draft town plan and try to come up with something).
 - Moe will get key to Marsh Meadows gate.
 - Mary Floyd will talk to Linda Noyes about getting the info up on the board in front of building and get a key to building.
- Discussion of display/program at Forward Festival, Sept. 20th
 - We will try to present an outcome of the August public meeting at the Forward Fest. More to come on this later.
- Review of Open Meeting Law Changes, July 1st, 2014
 - Mary reminded us that agendas are required to be posted 5 days in advance, minutes should be posted 2 days after a meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Next meeting will be August 12th, at 6:30pm