

**Town of Monkton**  
**Town Forest Committee**  
**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, July 6th, 2023, 7:00pm**  
**Monkton Town Hall & via Zoom**

Members present: Jaime Schulte (Vice-Chair), John McNerney, Peter Dufault, Molly Parren, CJ Buzzy (Alternate)

Members absent: Callie Brynn (Chair - on maternity leave)

Guests: Monkton residents: Louise Watson, Susan Davis, Larry Pike, Walter Crandall (Selectboard), Barb Crandall, Chelsea Szarejko, Joe Szarejko, Georgia Wright, Jesse Watson, Sue Grover, Stephen Pilcher (Selectboard); Non-residents: Scott Shepard (Georgia Wright's partner), Ellen Buley (Jesse Watson's partner); Bob Heiser (Vermont Land Trust).

**Call To Order** - Jaime called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**1. Public Comment**

- a. Walter asked for an update on town forest funding. Jaime gave an overview. We are awaiting a decision by the federal program on the grant applied for. Applications for the town portion of the project budget (ARPA and ANAC funds) are with the Selectboard. The Selectboard is awaiting the results of community outreach by the committee (including the postcard survey) before taking up the applications.
- b. Louise asked about the results of the survey. Jaime said that an additional 70 cards were picked up in the office today, which should bring us up to about 450 postcards received, which is a great response of about 25% to the survey. Support for the project from the community is clear in the survey results so far at a nearly 4-to-1 ratio. The committee is going to review a detailed report of town forest progress and survey results later in the meeting and will be sharing that with the community and Selectboard as soon as this latest batch of postcards can be added in.
- c. Louise asked about the easement and existing uses. Bob talked about the easement and how the project would progress toward the management plan phase.
- d. Scott asked about hunting and the potential for a safety zone of some kind for the residences on Airport Rd. This has been a concern in the past, but would be a greater concern with more hunters on the land in the future. A safety zone is an option and can be explored during management plan development.

**2. Reviewed minutes of 6/6/2023**

- a. **John moved to approve the minutes of June 6th, 2023 as written.** Molly seconded. There was no additional discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**

**3. Executive Session**

- a. Discussion with the residents of Old Airport Road to hear their perspectives on the shared maintenance of this private road and to begin developing the outline of an agreement between Old Airport Road residents and the Town regarding that maintenance (to take effect if/when the proposed Monkton Town Forest is established).
  - i. Finding regarding the need for Executive Session

1. **John moved to find that general public knowledge of the viewpoints of individual residents of Old Airport Road, regarding the future of Old Airport Road and a potential shared road maintenance agreement with the Town of Monkton, would place those residents and the Town at a significant disadvantage, because public scrutiny of each individual would tend to suppress candor about what a sustainable and satisfactory agreement (a contract) would look like for residents from their perspective. The Town is best served by the Committee listening more privately at first and then sharing a draft contract with the public once it is generally acceptable to the Old Airport Road residents as a group and to the Selectboard. Molly seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**
- ii. **John moved to enter Executive Session on the basis of our finding to discuss a potential contract between the Town and the residents of Old Airport Road regarding the future shared maintenance of that road and that we invite the residents of Old Airport Road and their family members present, the Selectboard members present, and Bob Heiser of Vermont Land Trust to join the Committee for that discussion. Molly seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).** Entered Executive Session at 7:28pm.
- iii. **John moved to exit the Executive Session. Molly seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).** Exited Executive Session at 8:37pm.
- iv. The committee thanked the residents of Old Airport Road and the Selectboard for attending.

#### **4. Community input/outreach updates**

- a. Outreach event recaps (info session, site walks, Strawberry Festival)
  - i. The Committee held a 5th site walk on June 17th, an info session at Town Hall on the 21st, and an info table at the Strawberry Festival on June 25th.
- b. Mailing/postcard survey
  - i. Approximately 450 postcards were returned in June! We will complete an exact count to update the draft project report for the Selectboard. This is a strong response (about 25% of registered voters have returned a postcard). Support for the project and the proposed use of ARPA and ANAC funds is running well over 3-to-1 in favor. Overall there are at least 560 residents engaged with the project in some fashion, including more than 100 who did not return a postcard (they attended a meeting, emailed the Selectboard, signed the petition, etc., instead). Overall support appears to be greater than 3-to-1 for the project with more than 30% of registered voters now having interacted with the project overall.
- c. We will continue to schedule site walks as there are requests.
- d. Discuss/prepare an update for the community and Selectboard
  - i. Discussed a draft project progress report that was sent to the committee to read in advance of the meeting. Jaime expressed appreciation for edits/corrections suggested by Molly and Bob.

- ii. **John moved to approve the town forest progress report, with the understanding that numbers will be updated, and submit it to the Selectboard. Molly seconded. There was no additional discussion. All were in favor (5-0-0).**
- iii. **John moved that the Monkton Town Forest Committee, in light of the community feedback received, recommend that the Selectboard approve the use of ARPA and ANAC funds as requested, toward the purchase of the proposed town forest. Pete seconded. There was no further discussion. All were in favor (5-0-0).**
- iv. Jaime will share the report with the Selectboard as soon as he can update the report with the additional postcard data. He will then also update the website, and put a post on Front Porch Forum and Facebook to share the results with the community.

**5. Grant/funding updates**

- a. Expecting to hear about the federal grant this summer.
- b. The Agricultural & Natural Areas Committee endorsed the Vermont Land Trust's application for up to \$45k from the ANA Fund and sent it on to the Selectboard with their recommendation to approve the application.
- c. Committee members anticipate visiting the Selectboard at their meeting on July 11th to discuss the progress report and survey results. We anticipate asking the Selectboard to take up the question of moving forward with the project and approval of the requested Monkton ARPA and ANAC funds.

**6. Set next meeting date(s)**

- a. Regular meeting: Monday, August 7th, 7:00pm

**Adjournment** - John moved to adjourn. All were in favor (5-0-0). Adjourned at 9:10pm.

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte.