

**Town of Monkton
Town Forest Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 6th, 2023, 5:30pm
Monkton Town Hall & via Zoom
(Approved: TBD)**

Members present: Callie Brynn (Chair), Jaime Schulte (Vice-Chair), John McNerney, Pete Dufault, CJ Buzzy (Alternate)

Members absent: Molly Parren

Guests: Bob Heiser (Vermont Land Trust), Walter Poleman (UVM), Stephen Pilcher (Selectboard), Monkton residents: Joe Szarejko, Susan Davis, Larry Pike, Susan Grover, Walter Crandall, Denise Dalton, Charles Paine

Call To Order - Callie called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

1. Reviewed Agenda - added discussion of a recreational trails grant opportunity.
2. Review 11/8/23 minutes - postponed until later in the meeting (and then to next meeting)
3. Public Comment (up to 15 minutes) - there was no public comment
4. Old Airport Road maintenance budget
 - a. Old Airport Road is an important access point for a large portion of the future Monkton Town Forest. The general consensus of the committee, Selectboard, and most residents of the road, is that it should continue to be a private road, with the town sharing in road maintenance.
 - b. In recent months the committee made a request for residents to bring forward an all-inclusive budget that accounts for materials, effort hours, use of personal equipment, contingencies, etc.
 - c. Tonight we heard a presentation of a proposed Old Airport Road maintenance budget from a group of residents who live on the road. That overall 2024 budget totals \$7,890. The committee reviewed the budget and found it reasonable. Discussed data and perspectives about estimated roadway use, roadway ownership, road frontage, etc., which may inform what the town's share of the budget should be. It was noted that use of the road has already increased as residents visit the property for a first-hand look, so there will be some impact in the first half of the year. Following a closing on the property mid-year we would anticipate a significant spike in visits to the new Town Forest, which will taper off by later in the year and settle into a more steady state in 2025. Taken as a whole we could see a full year's worth of activity on the road in 2024.
 - d. The town attorney, Jim Carroll, provided drafts of a Road Maintenance Agreement for Old Airport Road, and for a Public Access Easement, just minutes before tonight's meeting. The committee has not had an opportunity to review the

documents but will do so and indicated we will share them with Old Airport Road residents as well, for their consideration.

- e. Later in the meeting the committee looked at the documents briefly and immediately had some significant questions for the attorney. We will pursue a meeting with him and develop a complete list of questions as the next step.
5. UVM Landscape Inventory & Assessment class Jan-May '24 (Letter of agreement, budget, timeline)
- a. Reviewed the draft letter of agreement.
 - b. **John moved to recommend that the Selectboard approve the letter of agreement with the UVM Field Naturalist Program for the project work at the Monkton Town Forest and insert the amount of \$1500 as the town contribution to the class's travel costs. Jaime seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**
6. 2024 Annual Committee Budget & 2023 Annual Report
- a. Callie will work on a draft with Jaime of the 2023 Annual Report
 - b. 2024 Budget
 - i. The proposed Old Airport Road maintenance budget was discussed earlier in the meeting. It was noted that there are unknowns at this stage of the project and we will have more clarity on road usage, available town forest management funds, and other factors by next fall. We do, however, need to make a budget request for 2024 now. With the unknowns in mind the committee's goal for 2024 would be to have a starting point for shared maintenance that addresses the impact of already increased road usage and projected 2024 usage in a meaningful way, and that aligns with our best estimate of the share of traffic related to the Town Forest. This may need to be adjusted for 2025 and beyond as we gain more data on actual use.
 - ii. **Jaime moved that the Town Forest Committee recommend to the Selectboard that the town be responsible for 50% of the projected \$7,890 Old Airport Road maintenance budget (\$3,945), in consideration of the amount of anticipated road use by the public related to the Town Forest. John seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**
 - iii. 2024 Town Forest Committee budget request:
 1. Old Airport Road maintenance - \$3,945.
 2. UVM class transportation costs contribution - \$1,500. Discussed whether we could use the 2023 MTFC budget of \$1,000 toward this, but cannot due to the end of year approaching. We did not spend this amount earlier in 2023 because the Vermont Land Trust covered the cost of the mailing/survey about the Town Forest

instead. This \$1,000 will be returned to the general fund and requested again as part of the 2024 budget.

3. Mailing costs related to Management Plan development - \$750
4. Events - \$250
5. Total 2024 budget request (total of above items): \$6,445
6. **John moved to approve a budget request of \$6,445 which includes the Old Airport Road maintenance, UVM field naturalist class, and a mailing. Pete seconded.** There was no further discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**
7. Management Plan planning & community engagement timeline
 - a. We will establish a group to lead the interim management plan development at the January meeting.
8. 12/9 site walk planning
 - a. We are reaching out to residents who have expressed an interest in a walk, but were not able to attend previous walks. We'll meet at 10am on Saturday at the pond on Hardscrabble Road as the starting point.
9. Grant/funding updates
 - a. The Community Forest Grant program (federal grant) timeline has come into focus and we are on track. The grant paperwork is being processed by the CFP program currently.
 - b. Vermont Land Trust was awarded a Davis Grant for the Monkton Town Forest, in the amount of \$12,000, which applies toward the \$50k fundraising target.
 - c. An anonymous donation of \$10,000 and another \$5,000 donation have also been received. There are some other smaller amounts in process and additional outreach ongoing to potential donors, so we are over \$25k on the way to \$50k.
 - d. John attended a recreational trails grant opportunity presentation and Callie has reviewed the application paperwork. Discussed whether to apply this year (due December 30th) or to apply next year.
10. Other project updates & timeline review - None
11. Boundaries; Kaolin Dam; Barnum ROW
 - a. There is a boundary survey taking place related to the upcoming A. Johnson/Bowman Boundary Line Adjustment.
12. Twenge/Paul Fournier storm salvage update - work has been completed
13. Set next meeting date(s)
 - a. December 14th, 2023 - 4:00pm - Zoom only
 - b. January 10th, 2023 - 5:30pm

Adjournment - Jaime moved to adjourn. All were in favor (5-0-0). Adjourned at 8:20pm.

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte.