

Regional Conservation Partnership Meeting

Wednesday, March 27, 2019; 1:00 PM

Community Meeting Room, City of South Burlington Police Department

Attendees: Ashley Parker, SB Project Manager; Holly Rees, SB Director of Recreation and Parks; Melinda Scott, Williston Conservation Planner; Dean Pierce, Shelburne Director of Planning & Zoning; Dave Crawford, South Burlington Natural Resources Committee; Sarah Dopp, President South Burlington Land Trust; Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

Absent: Sarah Tischler, St. George Selectboard; Daryl Benoit, Town Planner, Town of Charlotte; Alex Weinhagen, Town of Hinesburg

Meeting began at 1:05 PM.

Round of introductions.

There were no changes to the Agenda.

We briefly discussed the minutes from the last meeting. There were no proposed changes to the minutes. Sarah Dopp requested a copy of the previous minutes and the RCP handbook. Ashley said she would send these.

Feedback on Draft Accord Language (see draft accord document) –

We briefly discussed initial feedback to the draft accord language. Most of the partners had not yet had a chance to present the Accord to their respective Selectboards and/or other town boards. Melinda Scott noted that the Williston Conservation Commission has no comments on the accord itself, but wanted to see a Charter document with details about who will represent the municipalities and partners, and how often the group will meet. Sarah Dopp suggested the language of the mission statement's first sentence should be revised, replacing the "partnership between" with "partnership among," to reflect that more than two entities are involved.

Review of the Draft Conserved Lands Map –

- The group reviewed and discussed the draft map of conserved lands Melanie Needle has prepared.
- Melanie stated the data was derived from town plan maps and the state conserved lands database.
- Dean Pierce noted that some of the lands shown are not technically conserved – for example, association lands and lands partially protected through development regulations.
- The group discussed and debated what levels of protection should be included in the map.
- Melanie stated that the Story Map will likely be a series of different maps, each telling a piece of the story. Some potential themes include type of conserved land, level of protection, type of access allowed.
- Dave Crawford stated it is important for the map to depict level of conservation consistently across the region.
- Melanie asked whether lands that have development restrictions ought not to be included.

- Sarah noted that development on some lands is restricted because of severe constraints like wetlands/swamps.
- Melinda noted that some lands in Williston have deed restrictions prohibiting development.
- Dean noted these deed restrictions are not enforceable.
- Dean noted that Shelburne separates conserved land from constrained land and land under regulatory restrictions. Association land has the lowest level of protection, open space agreements and public land has a medium level of protection and third party conservation easement is the highest level of protection. Dean suggested depicting on the map Low/Medium/High level of protection for purposes of consistency. Each town can determine which level of protection can be assigned to various categories of land. Melinda suggested that conservation commissions or natural resources committees may wish to have a role in determining this.
- Sarah stated one purpose of the mapping exercise is to visualize opportunities for connecting lands.
- The group discussed whether the map should be distributed to other town reps at this point, and the consensus was that it should not be distributed broadly as it is very preliminary and might be misinterpreted.
- Melanie said if the map is missing data the town currently has, to send it to her. More decisions need to be made by the group before additional map edits are made. Some useful information may be in the CCRPC's Open Space Plan. Melanie will try to locate and distribute it.

Next Steps –

- Next meeting: **Wednesday, April 17, 2019; 1 PM; South Burlington Police Station, 19 Gregory Drive, 1st Floor Conference Room.**
- Get towns' feedback on Accord language.
- We will be reviewing feedback received after partners discuss this partnership with community members.
- The UVM students will be providing the group with a status report of their project.