

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

January 30, 2018

MINUTES

Present at the Morrill Education Building at 7 p.m. were commission members: Kate Root, Mike Hebb, Steve Faccio, J.T. Horne, Jared Jenisch, and Steve Willbanks, Chair. Also present were Alex Buskey, from Alliance for Vermont Communities, and community member John Echeveria.

- **Minutes** from 11/28/17 were approved.
- **Manning property trail:** Alex Buskey, who is involved in the creation of the trail, spoke about the project. The Upper Valley Trails alliance is constructing the trail, which is 2 ½ miles, with another ½ mile of road. It doesn't currently connect to other trails, but there is potential for that going forward. It was proposed that the SCC endorse a resolution in support of the Manning property trail; the motion carried.
- **Hemenway Bench:** Kate will order the bench now for delivery when the weather is suitable.
- **The Whitcomb Hill access issue:** there was extended discussion of the request to the Selectboard by local landowners that the town-owned class four access road to Whitcomb Hill, as well as the parallel Stocklas Road, be gated and locked 7/10 of a mile before its end, so that the road can only be used on foot, due to signs of loitering in the area. This discussion did not reach clear agreement among members of the SCC.
- **Posting proposal:** Mike had proposed to the landowners that at least a sign could be posted indicating that the road is a dead end road that is not maintained, and that the land is private beyond that point with a public trail to Whitcomb Hill. All agreed with this.
- **Open Space Plan:** the list of protected sites in the OSP don't match up with the Town Plan, and some locations appear in neither. The argument was also made that generic language about valued spaces is better than specific listing of those spaces, which is more significant but also more controversial. Also, it was noted that "open spaces" doesn't represent well the nature of some of the sites involved; "open and special spaces" could be an alternative; or "culturally and naturally significant areas," as a way of talking about the places that make Strafford special. J.T. will initiate a rewrite of the OSP by the next meeting.
- **The next SCC meeting** will be February 27th.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Jenisch