

Jericho Underhill Land Trust monthly meeting – March 3, 2025

Board members present: John Connell, Sabina Ernst, John Koier, Michael Lazorchak, Lisa Paone, Phyl Newbeck, and Livy Strong

Guests: Sheryl Leslie, Scotty Geise, and Grace Bellevance

Livy called the meeting to order at 7:00.

1. Introduction of our two UVM interns: Scotty Geise and Grace Bellevance.

Scotty is a junior at UVM majoring in Environmental Studies. He and Grace are working on how to get young people involved in land trusts. They have made some promotional material to use on social media or via email. Grace is a senior at UVM majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Agro Ecology. She has worked with other towns on flood resilience and some restoration projects. She and Scotty just finished an information sheet on Mills Riverside Park which can be printed and shared digitally. The next project will be event advertisement for JULT's upcoming events. Michael said that we will be able to update the materials that the students will be providing.

Scotty thinks that young people may not understand the purpose of land trusts and may also not recognize which lands are conserved. He thinks that online communication is best for reaching a younger demographic. They are also thinking about putting together a video.

2. Review of minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of February 2025 were approved.

3. Financial report

Our total assets are \$1,402,758 consisting of \$1,187,502 in fixed assets, \$93,996 at New England Federal Credit Union, \$11,209 in our money market account, \$58,323 in our checking account, \$29,720 in Schwab investments, \$11,702 at the Vermont Community Loan Fund and \$10,305 at the Vermont Community Foundation.

We took in roughly \$700 in memberships in February. We spent \$4,493 consisting of \$281 in accounting fees, \$3,312 for invasive species removal, \$570 in membership dues, \$27 for office supplies, \$45 for administrative expenses, \$49 for subscriptions and \$203 for Wolfrun Natural Area property taxes.

Sheryl is unable to get some statements because she is not a board member, but we may be able to call her a staff member.

4. Membership/fundraising

Lisa said February was slow for memberships, but that is to be expected. She said that some of the memberships listed for February were actually January donations which weren't deposited until February.

## 5. Land stewardship

The timber stand improvement area has already been marked, and the work has begun, but thanks to the people in Washington DC none of us voted for, our \$10,500 grant from the Department of Agriculture was put on hold, despite having been approved by the people in Congress who represent their farmer constituency. In the event some of our congressional people develop some courage, wisdom, and empathy, which currently looks unlikely, we may see this money in the future.

Livy and John Koier will be meeting with Tyler Brown of Vermont Fish and Wildlife on March 25 at 9:00 am concerning the developing beaver situation at Kikas Valley Farm. All are welcome to join. If the funding does not get DOGEed, tree planting will be accomplished either on May 1 or 2 at Kikas Valley by volunteers from Sun Common.

Looking to the future, if we ever get a new farm bill out of Congress, we will be moving forward with work on Paul Mazza's farm field stream buffers and perennial seed planting.

Livy was approached by a woman who wanted to know if we were going to plow the small parking area at Kikas Valley Farm. Livy told her we no longer do that because it's too expensive. The woman wanted to know why Mobbs and Mills were plowed and Livy explained that those were owned by the town and the park district, respectively. Next year perhaps we can talk to the folks at Wingate to see if they have any ideas or want to collaborate on plowing.

Norma Blades reported that Caroll Stygles is in the hospital, and she doesn't expect him to survive. He's the person who hayed Riverside Meadow so we may need to find someone else to hay the property.

Livy has been looking at our signs and thinks we should replace them with newer ones. Sabina said the Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Committee has talked about trail map kiosks and naming trail. They have periodically talked about putting a kiosk at Wolfrun Natural Area but then they go on to other projects. John Koier has offered to go to Wolfrun with Jessica Dion of the committee.

## 6. Publicity

The newsletter is almost done and includes an article by Sabina. We are looking forward to seeing what Grace and Scotty will do. Livy has seen an infographic that they've come up with.

Another UVM group of seven students is looking at erosion along the Browns River. They've come up with a draft management plan. One student brought a drone and used it to document how the erosion is affecting the banks. Livy is enjoying working with them.

## 7. Events

Livy would like us to collaborate with the Food Hub whenever possible. Sabina suggested getting a chef and preparing a dinner with local food. John Connell suggested a joint meeting with the Food Hub.

On March 15 we will have a winter tree identification walk with Cathy Paris and Dave Barrington at Mills Riverside Park. Sabina offered to help promote it on Front Porch Forum and John Koier will do so on the Underhill forum. This is a new event for us.

We will have our annual spring wildflower walk on May 3 with Michele Tulis followed by our annual bird walk on May 10 with Sabina and Evergreen Erb. The walks started before the park was officially conserved.

## 8. Community News

Livy was invited to attend a South Burlington land trust meeting. Sabina said there will be a survey about bear interactions at the Underhill Town Meeting. She said the Jericho Conservation Commission is trying to work to preserve open spaces. She thinks the time is right to remind people about the importance of wildlife and what it needs. Livy noted that a lot of people use our land but don't recognize that it's conserved. Sabina said she recently spoke to a science class at the high school and when she mentioned the land trust one of the students asked if that was the "this land is conserved forever" sign people.

## 9. Any other business

John Connell suggested posting on Underhill Front Porch forum reminding people who ski at Tomasi Meadow that it is conserved land.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58

Respectfully submitted,  
Phyl Newbeck, JULT Secretary