



Winooski Valley Park District

Ethan Allen Homestead

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Minutes for January 23, 2024, Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees for Winooski Valley Park District

The meeting began at 4:34 PM. Meeting was held both in person at the WVPD offices at the Ethan Allen Homestead and virtually via Zoom.

Present (via Zoom): Susan Gilfillan (Colchester), George Tyler, (Essex Junction), Sonja Schuyler (Jericho), Larry Kupferman (South Burlington), Reid Willis (Williston), Bridget O'Brien (Winooski), Nick Warner (Executive Director) (in person at WVPD office), Lauren Chicote (Operations Manager).

Absent: Andrew Gregg (Burlington), Jeffery Theis (Essex)

Public Comment Period: There were no members of the public at the meeting.

Agenda Changes: No changes

Review and Accept Minutes from previous meetings: The Board reviewed the November and December minutes. Larry Kupferman moved to accept the November minutes with corrections to typos, seconded by George Tyler. The November minutes were unanimously accepted. Reid Willis moved to accept the December minutes, seconded by George Tyler. The December minutes were unanimously accepted.

Review and Accept Financial Reports: Lauren Chicote presented the July 1 – December 31, 2023, financial report for current fiscal year, FY24. It is now halfway through the fiscal year and the budget continues to remain on track. Currently there are no foreseen unanticipated large expenses that could offset the budget. Tree removal work is scheduled for later in January at the Ethan Allen Homestead to remove several hazard trees around the buildings, which can be a large expense. WVPD budgets for this in the subcontracted work line item of the operating budget. More tree removal work could be needed if there are more wind storms this winter. George Tyler moved to accept the financial report, seconded by Larry Kupferman. The final report was unanimously accepted.

Staff Updates: Nick Warner gave updates on the following items:

Open grant applications – still waiting to hear from VOREC and Lake Champlain Basin Program, notices expected to be received in late February.

PACIF Insurance Claim from July flood damage – all claims except for the Macrae Bridge were accepted. Damage to the bridge at Macrae could not be differentiated from being caused by the flooding event and normal deterioration.

WVPD staff has a walkthrough of the Allen House and Ethan Allen Homestead Education Center barn with contractor/restorationist Bob Peters and Ethan Allen Homestead Museum Board President Denny Mecham. Bob Peters will provide a scope of work for restoration work for both buildings. Project costs to covered by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

WVPD staff have been meeting regularly with partners from the Community Gardens programs

and other land managers that operate in the intervale to plan for and have a more coordinated response to future flood or other emergency events that might impact the area. This includes the WVPD, Intervale Center, New Farms for New Americans, and Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront staff.

Meetings with Member Communities – WVPD staff met with/presented to the City of Essex Jct. City Council on January 10, 2024, and City of Winooski City Council on January 16, 2024, on FY2025 budgets. The board discussed Winooski’s continued underpayment and the unfairness to other member communities.

Executive Session: The board discussed the need to enter Executive Session to discuss matters of real estate; the property to be discussed have been previously discussed in executive session. George Tyler moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding real estate matters would clearly place WVPD at a substantial disadvantage, because the Board of Trustees risks disclosing its negotiation strategy if it discusses the proposed property in public; seconded by Reid Willis/Susan Gilfillan. Susan Gilfillan moved to enter Executive Session to discuss real estate matters under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes; seconded by George Tyler. The motion was unanimously approved. The board entered Executive Session at 5:23pm.

Susan Gilfillan moved to exit Executive Session; seconded by George Tyler. The motion was unanimously approved. The board exited Executive Session at 5:29pm.

Other discussions: The board discussed the need for publicity of projects and volunteer opportunities. The board offered to post on local Front Porch Forums and other community notices forums opportunities for volunteer projects and information about projects.

Adjourn: Susan Gilfillan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Reid Willis. The meeting adjourned at 5:38pm.

Next Meeting: February 20, 2023, at 4:30pm.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

Lauren Chicote, Operations Manager