



Barre Town Community Forest Management Plan Committee Meeting Minutes November 21, 2022

The Town of Barre Community Forest Management Plan Committee held its first meeting on Monday, November 21, 2022, starting at 6:30pm. The meeting was held in Conference Room #3 in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road. Committee members present included: David Rouleau, Patty Meriam, Lori Bernier (remotely), Josh Howard, Dean Preston, Larry Rogacki, and Jim West. Also present at the meeting: Selectboard Chair Paul White, Town Manager Carl Rogers, Recreation Director Johnny Crossley, Washington County Forester Robert Nelson (remotely), and Caroline Earle, Esq., Counsel for the Committee.

1. **Call to Order: 6:30pm:** Town Manager Carl Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Rogers steered the meeting until a Chair and Vice Chair were elected.
2. **Consider Approving Agenda:** David Rouleau made a motion to approve the agenda, as is. Josh Howard seconded the motion. Patty Meriam made a motion to amend item #4, "Elect a Chair and Vice Chair," by moving it to Agenda item #7. Jim West seconded the amendment motion. The Committee then voted unanimously to approve the agenda, as amended.
3. **Introductions:** As this is the first meeting of the Committee, each member had the opportunity to introduce themselves. Selectboard Chair Paul White thanked the Committee members for volunteering to serve and expressed gratitude for their commitment. Rogers stated there is one more person absent from tonight's meeting who will be assisting the Committee, Caitlin Cusack of the Vermont Land Trust. She will have a chance to speak with the Committee at the next meeting.
4. **Open Meeting/Open Records Laws (Amended):** Rogers informed the Committee of Vermont's open meeting and open records laws, and how they will affect the Committee. Crossley will oversee writing and distributing the meeting agendas, recording the meeting minutes, posting both the agenda and minutes, and sharing the draft meeting minutes with the Committee. Patty Meriam asked where the documents will be posted? Rogers stated they will be posted on the Recreation page of the Town Website, in addition to the posting board in the Municipal Building.
5. **Review Committee Charge:** Rogers reviewed the Committee Charge that was adopted by the Selectboard on June 21, 2022. Rogers expressed this document serves as the blueprint for the Committee's review process. Rogers expressed several different community groups and individuals utilize the Town Forest for a number of purposes, and as written in the Committee Charge, it may benefit the Committee to solicit their input. In addition, the Committee could prepare topics in advance of a meeting in order to advertise said topics for the public's input. Rogers

let the Committee know that Washington County Forester Robert Nelson will be the professional Forester the Committee can use to obtain a written recommendation for a forestry plan. Jim West asked, how do the grants affect the Plan? Rogers stated he did not have a formal answer at this time, however, Crossley will be the Committee's resource for the grant information

6. **Overview of Forest Management Plan and Easement:** The Committee has received copies of the 2013 Forest Management Plan (FMP) prior to tonight's meeting. Additional resources related to the FMP can be requested through Crossley. Rogers provided a brief overview of the FMP. The Committee will decide how they will review the contents of the FMP over the course of their meetings. Jim West asked for clarification on the grantors/grantees portion of the Easement. In addition, Jim West asked, who owns the land within the Town Forest? Rogers explained that the individual's names listed in the grantors/grantees portion of the Easement have no role in this agreement. Caroline Earle suggested that this portion of the Easement is documentation conveying the history of property ownership. Rogers let the Committee know that they are not reviewing and revising the Easement. The Easement contains documentation conveying property ownership to the Town of Barre. Rogers reiterated that the individual's listed do not have ownership of land in the Forest, nor a role in reviewing the FMP.
7. **Elect a Chair and Vice Chair:** Rogers explained to the Committee that the Chair is tasked with consultation about scheduling and canceling meetings, acting as a point of contact with himself and Johnny Crossley, and leading the meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair serves these functions. Josh Howard made a motion to nominate Dean Preston as Chair. Dean declined due to the nature of his service calls. Lori Bernier declined to volunteer because she will be attending all meetings remotely. Jim West made a motion to nominate Larry Rogacki as Chair. David Rouleau seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously voted in favor of electing Larry Rogacki as Chair of the Committee. Larry Rogacki asked the Committee whom to elect as Vice Chair. Patty Meriam made a motion to nominate Jim West as Vice Chair. David Rouleau seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of electing Jim West as Vice Chair of the Committee.
8. **Procedures for Plan Review and Changes:** Rogers explained that the original FMP was compiled by Kate Wanner after reviewing several other Town Forest management plan. The original Committee focused on policy; what can be done and what cannot be done in the Town Forest. Rogers explained to the Committee they will decide how they want to proceed, what they want to address, the pace at which they meet, and any procedures or orders they choose to adopt. Jim West conveyed that they do not have the luxury of choosing the pace at which the Committee meets because the FMP indicates a new FMP must be adopted in February of 2023. Rogers explained that this is a self-imposed deadline. As long as the Committee meets consistently working towards a new FMP the deadline of February 2023

should not be perceived as an end date. The process could take a few months or even a few years. The Committee should be allowed their due diligence to serve the Committee Charge. Caroline Earle explained to the Committee that the Town of Barre has enlisted her service to assist them in laying the ground rules and procedures for their review. The ground rules are used to establish order, solidify Committee procedures, and create an environment of inclusion for the public's participation. Patty Meriam suggested: 1) Not speaking over someone, 2) 5 minute speaking times, and 3) the ability for the Committee to stop someone from grandstanding. The Committee members had an open discussion on speaking time allotments, creating an inclusive space, who speaks directly with the public, open mind and acceptance of each person's abilities in terms of readiness, understanding, and contributions, and lastly, limiting repetition by asking the public not to repeat anything that has already been stated, rather to build on previous statements if they do not have something new to contribute. Rogers suggested reviewing the policy of the Barre Town Selectboard, as reference. Caroline Earle suggested the best way to create a Plan may be by following the Committee Charge, which does a great job at articulating the responsibilities of the Committee's review. Larry Rogacki asked if the public is considered to be just residents of Barre Town or Barre City too. Caroline Earle said that all of the public is welcome at these meetings no matter which town they reside in. There are members of the public whom live in other Towns, Counties, or States that may use the Forest and as such are members of the public at large, free to participate. Rogers added, anyone from the public can request records of the Committee as well. Jim West asked about the Forester recommendation. Robert Nelson stated, it is a document he would create giving a detailed account of the Forest's health, habitats, and prescriptions he would recommend to maintain the health of the forest. Larry asked if Robert would offer yearly prescriptive steps, similar to the original FMP. Robert indicated that there could be yearly prescriptive steps to address invasive species, identify habitat deficiencies, and harvesting timber. Robert conveyed the best time of year for him to conduct a field study to evaluate the forest and determine prescriptions would be from April to June.

9. ***Solicit Input from the Public:*** No members of the public were present at this meeting.
10. ***'Round the Table:*** Larry asked for everyone to provide a little feedback, in addition he shared his own hopes to boost educational opportunities through the Forest. Jim West articulated that he would like to have an agenda for the next meeting and develop a set of procedures. David Rouleau spoke from experience of serving on various boards and how it is great to have active participation from involved groups who act as Stewards of the forest, in their own right. David stated following the Committee Charge will be their best roadmap forward. Selectboard Chair Paul White reminded the group to keep their ears open and listen to the public's comments. Especially those who participate in one of the many recreational uses of the forest.

Patty Meriam stated, she had come to the Committee with concern over logging operations and felt she was learning a good deal about the forest by participating. Lori Bernier expressed hope for clarification in the new FMP on what will and will not be allowed in the forest. Robert Nelson said the original Committee's vision for the forest as a multiuse forest is his vision for the forest. He hopes to see a balance of recreational groups, education, and other uses. Josh Howard commented that it was a productive first meeting and the Committee will proceed step by step to achieve its end goal. Dean Preston expressed interest in the educational opportunities, such as planting orchards and allowing kids to have a hands on role in planting trees in the forest to take pride in their growth 20 years down the road. Crossley stated that he was pleased with the amount of interest in utilizing the forest for educational purposes. He conveyed the importance of creating educational opportunities and spoke from his own experience on how valuable internships, field trips, workshops, etc. can be to the next generation. Caroline Earle expressed great optimism for this Committee. She spoke of the benefit of having a diverse collective of individuals on this Committee.

11. **Meeting Schedule:** Larry made a motion to meet again Monday, November 28, 2022 at 6:30pm. Josh Howard seconded. The Committee voted unanimously to meet at said date and time. There was discussion to limit the next meeting to ninety minutes. In addition, several Committee members expressed interest in performing a walk through of the forest at a future meeting.

12. **Adjourn:** At 8:30pm, Larry made a motion to adjourn. Patty Meriam seconded the motion. The Committee then voted unanimously in favor of adjournment.

Patty Meriam

James P. West

L. Rogach

Dean Preston

J. Howard
