



# MINUTES

**Thursday - September 15, 2022**

**4:30 PM**

**Merck Forest & Farmland Center – Rupert**

Present: Nancy Faesy, Jim Hand, Ellen Maloney, Tom Wilson, Jane Davies (Rupert Village Trust), Jean Ceglowski, Bruce Lierman, Megan Herrington, Robin Chestnut-Tangerman, Charlie Rockwell, John LaVecchia Jr., Rob Terry (Merck Forest), Richard Zoppel, Sheila Kearns

Staff: Jim Henderson, Scott Grimm-Lyon, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Cat Bryars

After enjoying a meal from Zoey's Deli and a welcome to Rupert from select board member and BCRC commissioner, Charlie Rockwell, the meeting was called to order at 4:55PM.

I. Minutes of July 2022 Meeting

Motion (Lierman): Approve as presented. Second by Herrington. Passed unanimously.

II. Public Hearing to Confirm Glastenbury, Manchester Village, and Sandgate Town Plans

Motion to open the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman. Question from Lierman about the general town plan adoption and confirmation process answered by Cat Bryars. Motion to close the hearing (Rockwell). Second by Lierman.

Ballot Results: 11 municipal commissioners and 2 special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Planning processes for Glastenbury, Sandgate and Manchester Village were approved.

III. Public Hearing to Confirm Act 174 Energy Compliance for Glastenbury, Manchester Village and Sandgate Town Plans

Motion to open the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Faesy). Second by Lierman.

Ballot results: 11 municipal commissioners and 2 special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Glastenbury, Sandgate and Manchester Village plans were deemed to be in compliance with Act 174 Energy requirements.

IV. D&H Rail Trail Project Update

BCRC Environmental Program Manager, Jim Henderson, gave a brief history of the D&H Rail Trail and current grant-funded projects. Rupert received an outdoor recreation grant to improve parking access and signage in collaboration with the Town of Pawlet which will be building a visitor center.

V. Merck Forest Programs

Executive Director, Rob Terry gave an overview of Merck's current programs and plans for the future. Merck is part of a 42,000 acre unfragmented forest block and serves as an important migratory corridor. Merck Forest is a 3,500-acre property with approximately 35 miles of hiking trails and is currently in the midst of a 10-year strategic plan to "build back better."

Education is at the core of Merck's mission to inspire curiosity about natural and working lands, and the organization has formed a partnership with Mettawee Community School.

VI. Rupert Village Trust Activities

Rupert Village Trust President, Jane Davies, gave an overview of projects including the Sheldon Store and Town Green events. The Trust is trying to create a community hub in Rupert's Designated Village Center with events at the Sheldon Store and Town Green, both of which are near the D&H Rail Trail. The Trust has organized several events at the Sheldon Store including board game nights, music, and coffee. During COVID, they quickly pivoted to outdoor events at the Town Green. The Trust has received grants from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and Senator Leahy's office for building renovations and improvements.

Cat Bryars announced that Rupert recently won a New England regional planning award for the Sheldon Store project. The project was successful in part because of the Town's progressive zoning regulations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.