

Schenck's Island / Merwin Meadows Study Committee  
9/26/2017 Meeting – 7:30pm – Comstock 13

In attendance:

- Voting members: Dan Berg, Jade Hobson, Ben Couch, Andrea Preston, Peter Gaboriault
- Town liaison: Mike Conklin
- First Selectman's liaison: Sarah Gioffre
- Guest: Donna Merrill – Wilton Land Conservation Trust

Absent without notice:

- Voting members: Susan DiLoreto, John Priest
- Town liaison: Steve Pierce

Meeting called to order at 7:31pm by Dan Berg

Motion to approve minutes from 7/25 meeting was made by Dan

Seconded by Jade

In favor: Dan, Jade, Andrea, Ben

Opposed: none

Abstain: Peter

Motion carried 4-0-1

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BY: H. Cooper

Donna and Peter provided an update on a study the Land Trust commissioned to evaluate all Land Trust-owned meadows in town. Jim Nordgren was retained for this evaluation. Schenck's Island was included in the study. There are numerous invasives present in the meadow areas at Schenck's, including most prominently, mugwort. Jim's report included a leave-behind describing potential remediation plans to combat invasives. Peter stressed that the meadow at Schenck's will need management over time to prevent it from being fully invaded. Mike Conklin pointed out that management of all town-owned meadows will align with Land Trust maintenance plans.

Ben provided an update on Trout Unlimited activities. TU is working with a \$60K memorial fund for river restoration and upkeep projects. The latest funded project of note includes plantings done by the river at Schenck's during September and August, similar to what was done at Merwin Meadows last year. Signage was posted explaining the nature of the project. Ben also added that TU is setting up a new Norwalk River Fund which will be done "private equity style", with commitments made by funders now, but actual donations collected via "capital call" at appropriate times based on the group's readiness to undertake specific projects. The goal is to raise approximately \$100,000 in this manner.

Mike brought up the issue of the rotting post and rail fence at Schenck's Island and asked for the Committee's opinion as to what should be done, so as not to expend too much cost and energy with a repair plan that will not align with the Committee's vision / plan for Schenck's. The consensus is to make inexpensive repairs so that the fence is not dangerous or an eyesore, but not to get too involved at this time. Dan clarified that at present, the Conservation Commission has jurisdiction / decision-making power regarding this park and its fence, but that it makes sense to try to align repair plans with the Committee's longer-term vision, so the two groups are not working cross purposes. Mike also noted that there's a hornets' nest near the picnic tables which will be removed.

Dan provided an update on the latest draft of the RFP. Minor changes were made based on the feedback from the prior meeting, and at this point, we agreed that this is the final draft prior to review with Lynne. The next step is to set up a meeting with Lynne, Dan, Mike and Sarah to take Lynne through the Committee's thought process and specifics, and review the draft RFP. After that, the next steps will include review by town counsel, publication on the town's web site, and solicitation of bids.

Motion to adjourn was made by Peter

Seconded by Dan

In favor: all

Motion carried 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm