



VERMONT URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

Quarterly Council Meeting

December 8th, 2021

Teams

Minutes

Attending: Richard Amore, Josh Behounek, Cecilia Danks, Bonnie Donahue, Kate Forrer, Joanne Garton, William Jewell, Ann Hazelrigg, Emilie Inoue, Suzanne Kelley, Gwen Kozlowski, Melissa Levy, Bob McCullough, Sara Packer, Tim Parsons, David Raphael, Elise Schadler, Warren Spinner, Bonnie Waninger

Welcome and Council Business

2022 Meeting Dates and Locations

- March 9th, 2022 (virtual)
- June 8th, 2022 (field trip)
- Sept. 14th, 2022 (Council member host, Sara Packer in Johnson?)
- Dec. 14th, 2022 (Montpelier, business meeting)

Council Leadership: 2 vacancies remain (will continue with 2 on leadership team, may adapt bylaws, or see if someone else wants to step up.

Joshua Behounek highlighted challenge of getting planting plans approved from Vtrans. There are limited guidance bullets, but it is unclear how to actually get plans approved. Bonnie Donahue will check into it.

Aesthetics and Energy Projects (David Raphael)

Council member David Raphael shared about his recent involvement in and attention to landscape mitigation for a solar project in Panton. *Note for future council topic as there was interest and good discussion.

Year in Review, Planning and Dreaming Big

- **2022 appropriations**, UCF will be funded at \$40 million and VT UCF receive an additional \$50,000 in core program budget again
 - \$4 million has been earmarked for another Urban Forest Resilience Grant Program (up from \$2 million)
- **Infrastructure Bill**, funding and focus for green jobs development; over \$490 million available for natural infrastructure.
- **Build Back Better** (not yet passed), \$2.5 billion for federal UCF program for 10 years.. \$250 mil/year (substantial increase over the \$40 mil/year);

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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VT Urban & Community Forestry Program
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2021 VT UCF Program Highlights

- Town forest governance, workshops and interest
- Resilient Urban Forests for All Project technical and financial assistance partnership
- EAB and Ash trainings
- Municipal Technical Assistance and Inventory Tools
- Forest Pest First Detector Course
- New forest pest id cards
- Heartwood podcasts
- Professional webinars
- Shift from EAB to other forest pests
- Community Canopy programs
- Big tree program
- Arbor Day Kits with Dept. of Libraries
- Tree warden support and VT League of Cities and Town partnership
- \$75,000 in grants to municipalities
- JEDI work

Staff reflection themes

- New partnerships, fostering deeper relationships with existing partners
- Cross pollination with other staff, programs
- Strategic programming for underserved audiences
- Telling out story better
- Pandemic impact: what does the future hold for in-person programming
- Citizen science
- Graduate students and interns
- Creating educational programming to continue to support volunteers

There are gaps

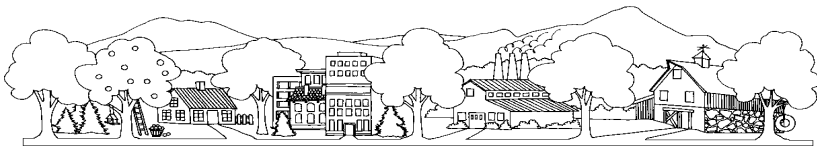
- Village greens, green stormwater infrastructure in downtowns
- Urban forest planning
- Data, research, connection to academia
- How has the pandemic impacted urban & community forestry in VT?

Council broke into small groups to discuss these questions (see Elise's notes for compiled answers)

- In the short-term, how should VT UCF use \$50k increase to core budget in FY22?
- We will apply for EAB focused Urban Forest Resilience project: what should we propose?
- In the longer term, what are your ideas as we consider future programming?
- What partnership should we explore?

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Focused Program Discussions

Program staff provided details about specific projects/initiatives and led small group discussion to gather feedback and discuss next steps on the following:

1. The Vermont Tree Selection Guide and Tool update
 - a. Discussion of Guide principles as drafted and proposed by David Raphael
 - b. Discussion of other existing planting lists that should be reference in the guide
 - c. Discussion of tree species notes from Charlie Plonski (New England Nursery Sales) and John Padua (Cobble Creek Nursery)
2. Community Governance in Town Forests Study
 - a. Overview of the project/study. Next steps in this work:
 - i. Develop best practices around governance and community highlight that reflect how those best practices are being employed by communities
 - ii. Explore partnerships with Dept of Health, specifically working with offices of local health to promote town forests
 - iii. Explore opportunities to integrate JEDI work, specifically but not limited to ADA accessibility and town forests; land acknowledgement work and use by BIPOC community
 - iv. Add historical context to our outreach around governance, such as 1915 legislation and history of democratic decision making
 - v. Continue to work with Cecilia on town forest census
3. Tree warden support
 - a. Discussion included:
 - i. Support Community Canopy program, JEDI initiatives, and the strategic programming that pushes JEDI education, action and objectives.
 - ii. Emilie mentioned further support for wood utilization. We can find partners so that communities can remove trees and use the wood locally. Can we use money to purchase mobile equipment and partner with an organization that can oversee its use and safety?
 - iii. Cecelia mentioned JEDI work and their situation for Richmond Racial Equity group that wants to pay for authentic and traditional knowledge that can guide forest management in their town forest. However, they recognize that asking someone or a small group of people to do this for many town forests statewide would be cumbersome, even if they were paid a stipend. There could be a package of assistance for town forest committees that includes the services of, or knowledge of, a tribal forester.
 - iv. Provide more outreach to selectboards about the role of tree wardens.
 - v. Provide more outreach to utility companies about shade trees, the role of tree wardens, and the methods by which they can/should contact town clerks to notify of tree trimming so that the tree warden will be aware and can be present.

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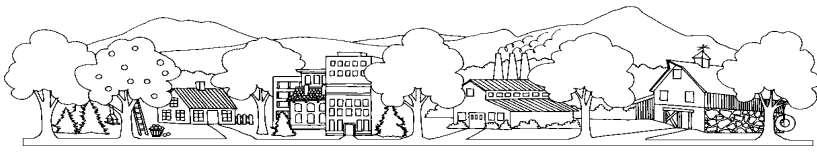
Getting to know you

Elise, Melissa, Warren, and Joanne shared career paths and interest in urban forestry work.

Meeting Adjourned

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