

## WEST WINDSOR SELECTBOARD

Draft Minutes

April 5, 2011

Present: Glenn Seward, Bruce Boedtke, Cathy Boedtke, Martha Harrison, Erik Schutz, Patrick Kell, Jim Lyall

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Glenn Seward called the meeting to order at 1:23 PM.
- 2) Changes or Additions - None
- 3) Discuss expanded use of West Windsor's mountain bike trails with representatives from the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) and Sports Trails of the Ascutney Basin (STAB) – Jim had a map showing existing trails and potential trail expansions into Windsor near the correctional facility, along the Connecticut River, and out to Paradise Park. Glenn asked which expansion would happen first. Jim said the state park didn't get the funding they needed for trail expansion on their property. Patrick said if there's a really good trail network and it's not accessible from the state park, there's more incentive for the state to build a connecting trail so bikers can camp at the state park and still access the trails. Patrick said Ascutney State Park is underutilized and would like to attract more visitors. There was discussion about the need for signage to prevent bikers from using hiking trails in the state park that are not appropriate for biking. Erik and Patrick said that conflict among different user groups is blown out of proportion. Glenn asked Patrick how West Windsor compares to other communities that have done similar projects. Glenn also asked how West Windsor should get started and how this project might evolve over time. Patrick said he works with the state department of forests & parks and the Green Mountain National Forest. Patrick described a similar project in the Stowe area and the benefits to public health, especially with regard to obesity in children, and tourism/ economic development. Patrick said the Stowe project got Act 250 approval last year and they started building new trails immediately afterward. The town of Stowe approved \$15,000 for new trails because of the economic development benefits. Patrick said a properly constructed mountain bike trail will not cause erosion. Patrick also described a project in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area near Middlebury in the Green Mountain National Forest, which received \$150,000 from the Forest Service for new trails. Bruce asked about marketing. Patrick said it's important to build good quality trails first. Patrick described a trail network in Waterbury that is very popular with no advertising other than word of mouth. Cathy asked if Waterbury and Stowe charge a use fee. Patrick said no; the trails are managed by the local mountain bike club and people pay to join the club but they don't have to pay to use the trails. Patrick noted that there is a bike shop at the trail head in Stowe. Patrick said people don't sneak onto the Kingdom Trails; they want to pay to support the facility. Cathy asked about liability. Patrick said when you pay the fee to use the Kingdom Trails you become a member for the day. Glenn asked Patrick where we go from here. Patrick said local property owners would probably appreciate it if the trails were accessible from a parking area at the resort so the quiet back roads are not overwhelmed with traffic. Patrick said it's also important to create beginner level trails close to the parking area for kids and families. Jim said he thinks that expanding the trails into Windsor would also bring people out to West Windsor, but it's going to take awhile. Jim said it has been suggested that trails behind the park and ride in Hartland would be fun, highly visible, and easy to build. There was discussion about the terrain around the base of the Resort. Glenn said there used to be a nice cross country trail that ended up at the General Store. Jim said step one is to revive that and make it user-friendly. Glenn asked about permits. Patrick said for the work in the Waterbury-Stowe projects they had to go through Act 250 because of the amount of ground disturbance. Patrick said the property owners involved had to sign the Act 250 application. Patrick emphasized the importance of good communication with property owners because the permits run with the land and are going to be there forever. Glenn said he thinks it would be worthwhile to start a dialogue

with the current Resort owner because it wouldn't cost them anything and could be a selling point. Bruce said sometimes the Act 250 commissioner wants to make sure that the landowner has complied with every condition of every previous permit before issuing another permit. Bruce suggested using existing ski trails so little or no new construction is needed. Jim said ski trails are not mountain bike trails but on flatter areas it might work although bikes would be going across rather than down. Jim said eventually the trails would have to be improved and permits would probably be necessary. Patrick described the Pine Hill Park trails in Rutland, which are similar in length to West Windsor's trails but the terrain is very different. Cathy suggested networking with the communities around us to make this area a "destination" for hiking, biking, canoeing on the Connecticut River, etc. Patrick said there is a conference on May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Trapp Family Lodge that might be of interest. Glenn asked Patrick if he would be willing to provide background information on other projects at a public meeting. Patrick said yes. Patrick said he thinks there's a lot of potential in West Windsor but it's important to address the concerns of neighbors. Cathy suggested building a beginner trail on state park land with volunteer help. Jim said it's hard to get the club excited about building and maintaining a trail that they then have to pay to ride on. Glenn asked how much it would cost to build a trail connecting the state park with West Windsor. Jim said it's about 5 ½ miles. Patrick estimated six figures due to the difficulty of the terrain, which includes ledge. Patrick said once a mountain bike trail is built by a professional trail crew to the proper standards, it will be there forever. Glenn asked if money is the main obstacle to building the connector trail. Patrick said yes. Bruce asked if it would make sense to start the permitting process for the connector trail. Patrick said yes. Erik said there's going to be a public meeting on the future of the campground and the state park. Once the date for that meeting is known, Erik said, STAB will get the word out to the mountain biking community. Glenn said the town should get public input, explore the possibility of establishing trails on easier terrain, and think about what needs to be done to build the connector trail. Jim mentioned the possibility of expanding the trails west across the Yale Forestry property and the Armstrong property. Bruce said we need to educate the public about the potential of this project. Cathy mentioned Oakridge, Oregon, which is known for its mountain biking. Martha asked Jim if the talc plant property would be of interest. Jim said yes and described the property to Patrick. Cathy suggested connecting to the talc plant area and the southwest side of town through the Wildlife Management Area. Jim said 12 years ago, the state would only allow mountain biking on gravel roads but they also suggested contacting the snowmobile club about using their trails. Jim said Terry Macdonald suggested forming a managing board composed of business owners in addition to mountain bikers. Jim said he will provide Glenn with a map of existing and proposed public mountain bike trails. There was discussion about the conversion of the unused railroad track in Windsor to a multi-use trail and discussion about scheduling a public meeting in West Windsor. Glenn said the town will have to approach the resort owners if we're going to move forward with this. Bruce suggested including Orange Lakes in the conversation as well. Glenn agreed. Glenn said he will be reviewing all this with the Planning Commission next week as well.

- 4) Other Business - None
- 5) Adjourn - **Glenn made a motion to adjourn at 2:45 PM. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison