

Readfield Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Present: Bruce Hunter, Greg Durgin, Marty Hanish, Linnea Koons, Andy Walsh
Absent: Jerry B., Jaaron S.

Guests: Nikki Leroux and Justin Triquet, Forest Fungi Farms LLC; JustNiks Mycosilva LLC

New Business

Chaga Presentation - Nikki Leroux and Justin Triquet of JustNiks Mycosilva LLC (Forest Fungi Farms LLC) briefly re-introduced the chaga forest farming operation, product benefits, and the investment opportunity of chaga cultivation for the town. Materials available ahead of the meeting included RCC questions and answers from JustNiks, draft contract agreement, and LCC certification. Justin and Nikki took questions from RCC members regarding the proposal. Approximately 50 acres of wooded town land would be targeted for inoculation of birch species (all 3 birches are suitable: yellow, white, and gray birches). JustNiks would inoculate trees yearly to ensure payout over the years.

The chaga operation would require a Selectboard approval and a town vote.

Old Business

Fairgrounds Working Group – Greg D. and Andy W. gave an overview of the Feb. 16 meeting. Greg Leimbach presented a visioning exercise to the group that solicited a range of possible uses of the FG. The discussion ultimately focused mainly on the development of a second ballfield at the property. Sean Keegan mentioned the advantages of having two ballfields that would allow for other recreational activities, namely soccer. RCC reps Andy W. and Greg D. highlighted the natural resource and wildlife values of the existing field habitat at the FG, as well as its scenic value to users walking the trails. Andy W. also mentioned the potential interpretive and educational value of the fields for both users and local schools. Other stakeholders spoke of issues of concern: no net loss of trails (Rob Peale, Trails Cmte.); accessibility and public restrooms (Elaine Katz, Age-Friendly Cmte.), environmental habitat impacts (Marianne Perry). The need for a community center and the use of the FG as a venue for community events was discussed. Jerry B. suggested that the goal of the next meeting (March 2, 2023) is to seek consensus.

Comprehensive plan – Greg D. summarized the public meeting on Jan. 28, 2023 to discuss the CP survey. KVCOG gave a presentation and answered questions. Survey results to date indicate that quality of life is important to residents, as well as having a restaurant, store, and gas station in town. The March public meeting will discuss revisions. A warrant will be prepared for the June town meeting.

Open Space Plan – The OS plan will be completed in August and Linnea K. will be the lead for RCC. Bruce will send out sections of the Comp Plan (including open space sections) for RCC comment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Andy Walsh on March 11, 2023