



## South Burlington Land Trust Board Meeting Minutes

July 31, 2019

Northfield Savings Bank, Shelburne Road, South Burlington

Present: Sarah Dopp, Michael Mittag, Penne Tompkins, Duncan Murdoch, Rosanne Greco, Karen Ryder, Janet Bellavance, Allan Strong  
Guest Member: Morgan Perlman

Meeting called to order at 4:43.

Minutes from 26 June 2019. Motion to approve by Michael Mittag, Duncan Murdoch seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

Membership report:  
1 new member since June

Financial report:  
Donation of \$2250 to The Nature Conservancy included a gift of \$250 by a member for the Shelburne/SB land purchase. Some questions about accounting for the donation were reconciled.

Discussion with Paul Conner regarding Green Up Day.  
Division of labor was discussed. Paul suggested breaking up roads into manageable chunks, rather than assigning large sections of road. The city will help identify areas of SB in which there are significant amounts of trash. The goal would be to assess areas that have a lot of trash and try to focus on those areas and where possible, get sign ups in advance. The city will handle the publicity, the cost of the dumpster, and sign-ups in advance.  
SBLT will handle posters and prizes, connecting with other non-profits, running the event, and potentially posters with school kids to get them involved. We will run the actual event on the day and assign road sections to folks who did not sign up in advance.

SBLT strategy for adding another 1 cent to the tax rate for the Open Space Fund  
Rosanne set up meetings between the SBLT board and City Councilors (individually or in twos) to address an increase in the tax rate for Open Space. One cent is equal to approximately \$300,000/year. This was a strategy to get the Council on board and ask questions about the proposal. City Councilors were generally in favor.

An idea that came out of the conversations were additional sources of funding: donations, wills/estate planning, a tax break on a promise to sell to the city, and a CIF (conservation investment fund generated by development in the SEQ).

In March, there may be a significant tax increase associated with building a new school. So, a March referendum might be high risk, although it could also be seen as a bargain compared to the cost of building a new school. Regardless, the timing made the Councilors nervous.

Kevin Dorn suggested that there might be an opportunity to put a referendum on the ballot for November as there might already be an issue that the city wants to bring forward. If the City Council is in favor of the proposal (and a special election), then the issue can go forward for a vote. If not, then we would need 750 signatures to get a special election. There also needs to be a 6 week lead time, which means for a November special election, the ballot item needs to be ready in late September.

The strategy that was proposed by Councilor Riehle was that SBLT makes a case based on cost of some of the high priority properties identified by the IZ Open Space Committee, then we can look at how much money we will raise at 0.5-1.0 cent vs. 1.5 to 2.0 cents and what the shortfall would look like. The hope would be that this strategy would come directly on the heels of the IZ reports and could have some solid data to justify costs. There are also options for looking at purchasing conservation easements rather than outright purchase and there are options for grants to purchase conservation easements (especially for agriculture through VHCB). There are also options for creating a municipal bond fund, but the market in VT may not be particularly robust. Also, an option for the City is to offer a right of first refusal for purchase/easement for particular properties. SB has also pledged to abide by the conditions of the Paris Climate Accord and also to support regional greenhouse gas emission targets which would align with land conservation.

We decided to meet to talk about strategies on 8/6 at 6:30 to continue to develop a strategy for creating a referendum.

Allan will contact Bill Keeton about Forest Conservation at a City Council meeting (first and third Mondays of each month).

Note that there may be a conflict with several folks' attendance at the September meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:58

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Strong (acting secretary).