

# Minutes of the first meeting of the Roxbury Outdoor Committee On Recreation (ROCOR) Wednesday, 3 January, 2024, 6pm, at the Roxbury Community Center, Roxbury, VT.

## Members in Attendance:

Heidi Albright  
Andy Apgar  
Rene Bouchard  
Kahwa Douoguih  
William Hansen  
Bob Ketchel  
Skip Martin  
Ben Pincus  
Debra Rogler  
Eric Wardle

Overview: The initial meeting of this committee was a fairly informal discussion, with two motions offered, seconded, and voted by voice in the more traditional “Robert’s Rules” format: the positions of Chair (Ben Pincus) and Co Chair (Eric Wardle). Otherwise, the following topics were brought up in a give-and-take discussion, to share members’ thoughts on the committee’s priorities, scope, resources, limitations, and initial actions. These items are not in chronological order, but a collection of the main points discussed by the committee.

## (AP = action plan / actionable item)

- Quality of life development -supporting increased fitness and fun of Roxbury residents
- Need for greater safety on roads and new sidewalks. Is it possible to expedite storm drain research in order to improve or add substantial curbed sidewalks?
  - **AP Andy will reach out to friend who works in water quality at VT ANR to gauge a rough idea of the regulatory/water runoff issues involved**
- Concerns that opening land to outsiders might lead to more boundary disputes, and potentially limit the sense of freedom we have to randomly bushwack, hunt or forage on state land due to restrictions of trail systems and greater usage meaning greater stress on the environment. Some folks like the simplicity and freedom of the current state of affairs.
- Supporting the local economy – Randy’s store and what else? Minimal services in town for people to access due to lack of sidewalks, inability to build any additional businesses in town (lacking infrastructure such as septic/water)
- Liability concerns – also landowner contracts allowing easement access and perhaps allowing landowner right to renege on agreement due to misuse of access

- Community engagement in regular trail maintenance (supporting older property owners, who need help with trail clearing, etc.)
- Providing easy access to woodlands through existing state land including parking and trails.
- Accessibility – ADA compliant walkway.
  - **AP: network with Northfield accessibility group**
- Safe trails allowing local families easy access to store, school, downtown; e.g. Warren Mt. Road. It was mentioned how dangerous it is for local kids to walk to the school on existing roads.
- Other concerns: big issues facing town- e.g. septic, flooding and wastewater- we need to make sure these grants are prioritized over ROCOR grants.
- Make sure town's feedback is prioritized over the committee's visions and ideas
  - **AP: town feedback questionnaire rough draft due on January 31st for committee review.**
  - **AP: Ben will Have a rough draft of survey ready by January 31st**
- Bike trail to Northfield (gravel or paved) and mountain bike trails to Northfield
  - **AP: Kahwa as a liason with Nortfield MB community**
  - **AP: Kahwa will send Ben Northfield survey questions**
- Mountain Bike trails allowing multi-use access (less gnarly terrain, etc.)
- Network with other groups including Ridgeline Collective, Velomont, Northfield Backcountry ski folk, Northfield VOREC group, Long Distance Equestrian Trails network with Midstate Riding Club and Dog River Riding Club
  - **AP: Heidi will liaise with Midstate and Dog River R.C. and also Vermont Horse Council**
- Topo map inventorying existing/possible trail systems
  - **AP: Skip Martin will use state ANR maps to inventory state land with town road access to state land preceding next meeting on January 31 st**
- Inventory CCC trail systems
- Restricting access for ATVS/snowmobiles – more money for gates, etc? But also working with VAST and Lost Nation ATV so we are in harmony and are supportive of each other– emphasis on legal use of trails, holding groups accountable when illegal activity occurs
- Outreach for alternative grant options. Also talk of avoiding grants and focusing on local support / local control
- Thanks were extended to Rene Bouchard for his work in spearheading this committee, his research into other small towns' experiences with trail and recreational initiatives, and his research into grants and regulatory concerns that will impact this process. Rene emphasized that in the event of soliciting grants, we have a much better chance for funding if we create a "Master Plan." Also, if we connect Roxbury trails to a neighboring town, this also increases our chance for grants. When asked if Planning Commission had been contacted to coordinate municipal planning grant applications, or prioritize with other issues facing the village, he said he had (as an ARPA committee member), but that was prior to his involvement on the selectboard.

Election of Officers: **Benjamin Pincus: Chair, Eric Wardle Co-Chair** elected by motion, second, and voice vote

Appointment of Secretary: **Chair appointed Andy Apgar Interim Secretary.** The Secretary position will be on a rotating basis rather than fixed. Andy may need to step down due to work commitments/changing shifts, but will remain as active as possible on this committee. Agreed by consensus without objection.

Committee Liaison: Heidi Albright is on the Roxbury Planning Commission and will act as liaison between the Planning Commission and this committee. Agreed by consensus without objection.

Agreed upon meeting guidelines:

- Decisions will be made by consensus rather than vote. Robert's Rules may be invoked if necessary to break an impasse on an important topic, but consensus will be the goal. Agreed by consensus without objection.
- Meetings should be no longer than 1.5 hours. Agreed by consensus without objection.
- Tentative agenda will be emailed by Chair and Co chair one week prior to scheduled meeting, subject to revision and review. Agreed by consensus without objection. Draft minutes will be sent to the town clerk for posting to the website within five days of the meeting.
- Meetings will utilize zoom/google meet technology to allow remote access. Agreed by consensus without objection.
  - **AP: determine best method of hosting / sharing online meeting via town or personal online accounts**

Committee skills and talents (partial list):

- Kahwa Douoghuih has professional contacts with civil engineering students doing project work on trail/bridge building etc, as well as her experience helping to develop the Northfield trail system and fostering landowner cooperation for private trail network development.
  - **AP: Ben will contact Adam Sevi at Norwich University. Adam is a professor of Civil Engineering and has extensive mountain bike and backcountry skiing experience.**
- Skip Martin has extensive, professional trail building experience, both as a trail builder and a manager of trail building crews.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 31 st 6-7:30pm at the Roxbury Community Center.

**AP Ben and Eric will mail rough draft of AGENDA on or before January 24th.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8pm.