

Report from Land Use Committee; 3 Sept 2015

The Land Use Committee started up again after estivating most of the Summer. The document below summarizes some general thoughts and our understanding of the stages of the different topics. Green highlighting indicates the key action points.

A GENERAL SUGGESTION

The Land Use Committee would appreciate that, for each of the projects it's involved in, there be an IMG point person. Ideally, this would be a potential project manager for any action being proposed, and would be the person whom the Land Use Committee could touch base with in relation to the particular project without needing to always address questions or follow-up to the entire IMG. All official reports or broader questions would still come to the IMG as a whole. **Does the IMG agree that this is appropriate?**

OLD and ON-GOING BUSINESS

Here is a summary of the projects the Land Use Committee has worked with to date and their status according to our understanding. Please let us know if you have questions or additions:

- 1) **Stream Bank Erosion.** This issue was brought forward by the Committee and resulted in a meeting between Farm staff and Steve Nack of Columbia County Soil & Water. The main action deriving from this was the plan to re-do the main cattle crossing. We understand this is currently going forward. Field erosion is happening in the Young's Field, but there are no grant monies available for dealing with it and any action would likely involve major permitting issues. **At this time, we see no further role for the Land Use Committee.**
- 2) **Eco Districts.** This issue was presented to the Committee by the IMG. The Committee's involvement has to do with the land use that might be occasioned by such work. Martin suggested that we contact Pete Muñoz, who produced the concept outline for the Master Plan. In talking with Pete, it became clear both that changing technology and changing HVA needs required a review of the Master Plan proposal and that Pete wanted a clearer definition of his role in the development of the project. During an IMG discussion, it was decided that IMG would reach out to Pete and offer to pay for him to visit, so he could meet not only with the Land Use Committee but also with other interested parties and any project manager who has been selected. **We are waiting for IMG to schedule that meeting.**
- 3) **Parking.** The Land Use Committee was tasked with considering this issue in the context of questions regarding use of the Kretz Field and, peripherally, discussion of the location of a potential gym. We presented some ideas for consideration based around the understanding that overall growth and the growth of events cannot go forward without parking being addressed. The Farm and Campus Services did agree on a second entrance to the Kretz Field. We felt that that should have been done in the context of a larger parking plan. While we recognize that not all of our ideas may have been practical, we have not heard proposed alternatives. We believe

that efforts to grow on-campus events, such as the up-coming Fall Festival, need to include parking planning. **Suggestions have been presented to IMG, and if any further action would be useful, please let us know.**

- 4) **Alternative Energy and Energy Conservation Vision.** The IMG asked the Land Use Committee to consider locations for a potential solar panel array. After considering the issue, we felt that any solar array should be part of a more comprehensive energy vision for the Valley, including not only installation of generating capacity but also investment in conservation. In discussion with Martin, it was recognized that such a vision should not solely be the task of the Committee, but rather needs to be a campus-wide visioning process including, at least, employees and students. While glad to participate, the Land Use Committee does not have the person-power to orchestrate such an effort. **We are waiting for the IMG or some other designate to create a process that we can be part of.**
- 5) **Forest Management Plan.** The need for such a plan came in part out of the Land Use Committee and in part out of IMG desire to have a forest plan in the context of our CLC easement. Discussions with CLC made it clear that, from their perspective, we could write our own plan and that the main thing they are looking for is a conscious specification of forest-use goals and supporting stewardship. In the Spring, we had a series of fact-finding meetings with different groups of HVA colleagues who, as part of their work here, use the forest. One more of these meetings will happen this Fall. We also offered a series of well-received forest walks for HVA colleagues, which provided a good opportunity for learning about the forest and its uses from each other. **We hope to continue work on the Plan this Fall and to share it with IMG by early 2016.** As part of this process, we also discussed access to NYS land along the Taconic State Parkway, via the Duffy land. The Duffies were very welcoming and we agreed on a tentative route for the trail with them and an assistant teacher of the EARTH program who was going to supervise the trail building activity with the EARTH students. The trail was started very nicely but then, without consultation, it was connected to an existing trail on private property off Duffy's land. **We are currently assessing what to do about that.**

NEW TOPICS

Based on recent events, it might be useful to have a bee swarm policy and action sheet – i.e., expected protocol and contacts. This might also include policy for wasp nests which, we realize, are a distinct kettle of fish. **Does the IMG feel this would be useful?**

The Land Use Committee is also planning to walk Indian Valley with members of the Farm team to brainstorm over changes in the use of the fields in that area. **At this point, we don't see any reason for IMG involvement.**

As specified in the Committee's purview document, we expect that, if new properties are purchased along Schnakenberg Road, the Committee will be invited to walk the land and provide any ideas it might have in relation to the ecological management of that land. (We're trusting the Farm to do the agricultural management plan, of course!) **We will await notification from the IMG of when this would be appropriate.**