

Town of Concord
Estabrook Access Study Committee
Inaugural Meeting
April 27, 2016
141 Keyes Road

Members Present: Kathryn Angell
Justin King
Lisa Pohl
Bonnie Pohlig
Neil Rasmussen
Sally Schnitzer
Peter Siebert

Absent: Jeff Adams
Polly Reeve

Also Present: Nick D'Arbeloff, Carlisle designee
Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board Liaison

Public Peter Gifford
Nancy Cowan - Concord Land Conservation Trust
Carmin Reiss
Eric Green
Anita Tekle – Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am by Jane Hotchkiss, the Select Board Liaison. The Select Board appointed the Estabrook Woods Study Committee to review and make recommendations on the current tensions, which have arisen around access, parking and use of Concord's largest intact natural area. The committee was appointed by the Select Board with the expectation of a limited engagement, perhaps six-months in duration. The purpose of the Committee is to consider how to address the increased pressure for adequate and safe parking at trail heads, to review other impacts from increased visitor use, and to make recommendations to the Select Board for immediate and longer term natural area recreation management plans.

This was the founding meeting and as such focused on the administration and formation of the study committee.

Administrative

Committee members introduced themselves to one another with a brief discussion of their own Estabrook points of reference.

Authorization:

Town Clerk, Anita Tekle swore in Neil Rasmussen, having already done so with other members.

Open Meeting Law

Ms. Tekle then reviewed Open Meeting Law protocols, reminding the committee that any “conversations” that take place between five or more members constitute a quorum and are therefore a violation of OML. Conversation is defined as any form of communication: physical or virtual, so as Ms. Tekle warned that violations easily happen in email. The example of a note sent to the whole committee which one member responds to was used. Email should be uni-directional and replies should be confined to housekeeping items. Opinions or expressions are to be saved for public meetings.

Officers:

Sally Schnitzer and Polly Reeve were nominated for Co-chairs pending Polly’s agreement and a formal vote taken at the next meeting. The Committee determined to have shared clerk duties; responsibilities for the minutes will be assigned democratically beginning with those committee members with experience.

Committee structure:

Nick D’Arbeloff asked that there be clarity on his committee role, whether it be as a voting member or as liaison. He noted his history with Estabrook having served on a previous Estabrook Study Committee, disbanded in 2006. The Committee requested clarity from Concord’s Town Manager and Select Board by the next meeting.

Meeting Schedule:

Given the goals and timeframe for the Committee, bi-weekly meetings were established with mornings as the preferred time given access to town staff. Some night meetings are also expected. The next two meetings are May 12 and 26 at 7 am at 141 Keyes Road.

Discussion/Action Items

Once the formal structure of the committee had been decided discussion turned to next steps:

Research:

Neil Rasmussen and Peter Siebert offered to pull together maps on access points, trails, and parcels. Peter Siebert offered a preliminary map which captured many of the points of access and the committee determined that any point of access that ended in a private backyard, would not be included in the map of access points.

It was agreed that it will be important for the Committee to understand the unique mosaic of ownerships, purposes, and restrictions on public and private land in the Woods.

Kathy Angell and Peter Siebert both offered to pull together information on the history of the Estabrook Woods, and efforts to preserve it.

Members Justin King and Kathy Angell asked what access to town counsel would be available to the committee. Liaison, Jane Hotchkiss said she would address this question with the Select Board and Town Manager.

Public comment

Peter Gifford introduced himself as an interested resident and asked how citizens can find out about the work of the Committee

The Meeting Adjourned at 9:25am.

Approved by vote of Committee May 12, 2016