

APPROVED MINUTES

Town of Concord
Estabrook Access Study Committee
Meeting
May 12, 2016
141 Keyes Road

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

Also Present: Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board liaison
Nick D'Arbeloff (Carlisle liaison, non-voting)

Public Present: Christa Collins
Carmin Reiss
Jonathan Keyes

Sally Schnitzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

- 1. Review and approval of minutes for April 27 meeting:** The minutes from the Committee's meeting of April 27, 2016 were discussed. One amendment was offered, and it was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as amended. This motion passed unanimously.
- 2. Vote on Co-chairs:** It was moved and seconded that Sally Schnitzer and Polly Reeve be appointed as co-chairs of this committee. The motion passed unanimously. Sally and Polly will take turns chairing the meetings and plan to alternate taking minutes of each meeting. When one of them is unable to attend, another member of the committee will be asked to take minutes.
- 3. Correspondence:** All known correspondence related to the charge of the Committee received to date by the Select Board and others has been collected and distributed to members of the committee. There was concern expressed that there may be relevant items of correspondence that are still missing. Ruth Lauer will continue to collect any outstanding items and will distribute them to the committee so that we have a complete record. We agreed that

reviewing this correspondence is very helpful.

4. Administrative matters:

a. Email address and Committee webpage have been set up. The email address is estabrookcommittee@concordma.gov. The website can be found by going to www.concordma.gov > Boards and Committees > Estabrook Woods Advisory Committee.

b. Committee members were asked to review and if necessary correct their contact information.

c. We will hold a public hearing to provide an opportunity to gather various perspectives and concerns from members of the community in June.

Sally circulated a list of proposed meeting dates for the committee, based on meeting every two weeks on Thursday mornings. This schedule was generally agreeable to the committee, and the chairs will set up a Doodle poll to flag any particularly problematic dates. In addition to the public hearing in June, there will be another to present a draft of our final report in October. The suggestion was made to hold this hearing in the beginning of the month so that there would be time before our final meeting to review the draft before it is finalized in light feedback received.

d. In order to provide helpful information to the public before the public hearing in June, the committee will aim to make available through the website and/or at the hearing:

- The historical timeline
- The map and related spreadsheet showing access points to the Woods
- A map illustrating the complexity of land ownership in the Woods
- Other documents as developed if they are deemed to be valuable for this purpose

We will also prepare a short presentation at the beginning of the public hearing in June to highlight the information that we have collected to date.

A discussion followed about the need to educate the public about the complexity of ownership and conservation status of the various parcels that compose the Estabrook Woods. Most of the lands in Estabrook Woods are not public. Some of the private and institutional lands are restricted, others are not. The fact that each conservation restriction is individually crafted needs to be communicated; some offer public access while others do not.

Peter Seibert and Polly Reeve will work together to generate a map or maps to

communicate the relevant information about land ownership and public access.

All materials should be sent to Sally Schnitzer and clearly labeled. Everything being prepared will be preserved by Ruth Lauer in a committee notebook.

e. Other: Sally notified the committee that the Select Board will be reviewing the parking restrictions on Estabrook Road at their May 23 meeting, and she understands that the police chief will be recommending their continuation.

5. **Framing the Issue:** Each member of the committee spoke about their personal experiences of the Woods and understanding of the challenges that led to the committee's formation. There was no attempt to reach consensus at this early meeting, but points of view expressed by individual members include:

- Appreciation of the Woods as one of Concord's treasures
- Challenge of providing public enjoyment of the woods without overburdening landowners.
- Concord has several access points, three with parking. Carlisle has several more access points, some with parking.
- Many problems relate to dogs: waste, aggressiveness, etc.
- Many problems relate to bad behavior, which is hard to control. How can we encourage better behavior?
- Parking problems on Estabrook Road are relatively recent, likely due in part to the internet.
- More parking is needed if we want to encourage people to enjoy and appreciate nature and the Woods.
- There is a lot of pressure on Estabrook Road because it puts you in the heart of the woods quickly.
- Need to address bad behavior and problems with dogs – parking restrictions don't directly do this.
- The public does not know the rules. Need to establish clear rules (dogs, parking, etc.) and communicate through clear, consistent signage and the web.
- Users should be deputized to enforce rules; they could be our allies.
- New sign on Lowell Road looks like the Appalachian Trail or a state park. This is the wrong message.
- The preservation of Estabrook Woods was extremely creative and complex, and was not primarily about public recreation.
- Estabrook Woods is being falsely portrayed as a regional dog park on the web.
- Abutters have asserted rights to the trail from Estabrook Road and believe it could be closed.
- Harvard's interest in the Woods is its biodiversity and habitat value.
- There is a tipping point where excessive human/canine use threatens habitat integrity.
- Critical to educate the public and communicate clearly and consistently.

6. **Materials Review:** Committee members were asked to review Neil and Peter's work products and the timeline prepared by Sally and come prepared to discuss them at the next meeting. The Committee thought it would be useful to speak with the Police Department to see what data they have about parking or conflicts at Estabrook Road. Sally will contact the Chief. The Committee also wants to gain a deeper understanding of conservation restrictions in the Woods, and might want a presentation from town staff or others on that topic.

7. **Citizen's comments:**

Jonathan Keyes emphasized that Estabrook Woods was seriously jeopardized at one point. Carlisle, Concord, CLCT, and the Carlisle Conservation Trust put together a proposal to Harvard to preserve the Woods. We are very lucky that we have this resource today.

Christa Collins noted that the dog issue is one that Sudbury Valley Trustees is also struggling with, and they have an AmeriCorps volunteer working on this issue. She offered that this volunteer could come to a meeting to discuss their process and conclusions. She also wanted the committee to know about a current SVT project in Carlisle that will provide a new access point to the Woods.

Carmin Reiss emphasized the importance of publicizing the public hearing and suggest posting notices at access points.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 AM.