

APPROVED MINUTES
Town of Concord
Estabrook Access Study Committee
Meeting
September 1, 2016
141 Keyes Road

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

Also Present: Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board liaison
 Nick D'Arbeloff (Carlisle liaison, non-voting)
 Delia Kaye Natural Resources Director Town of Concord

Public Present: David Santomenna, Trustees of Reservations
 Paul Jameson
 Marcie Berkley
 Henry Schwan, Concord Journal

Polly Reeve called the meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

1. Review and approval of minutes for May 26 meeting

The minutes from the Committee's meeting of August 18 were discussed. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Correspondence

One email has been received since the last meeting, from Mr. Jameson of College Road. It has been circulated to the Committee members.

3. Administrative Matters

- a. Polly noted that we had originally hoped to have our second public hearing on October 6. It seems that the Committee will need some additional time to be ready for the hearing, and she suggested that we look at dates the last week of October. Jane noted that there will be a special town meeting this fall, and that we may need to work around other town schedules. The Committee discussed that we would need some more time after the hearing to consider public input, to adjust or amend any of our recommendations, and to prepare the final report. Sally and Polly will keep working on proposing a timeline, and will find out what dates are possible for a public hearing.

b. The Conservation Restriction for Punkatasset has been circulated to the members.

4. **Parking Survey.**

The parking subgroup has reviewed the DPW parking survey and also visited Punkatasset, Estabrook Road, Monument Farm, and Chamberlin Woods. Jeff Adams summarized. They recommend a few changes to the baseline inventory, based on their field observations. They would like to use 18 feet as the length of a space. They circulated a DRAFT chart showing the “base case” and some distinct scenarios.

Starting with Estabrook Road, Jeff noted that DPW measured only 6 standard spaces, because some of the currently used roadside spaces are less than the standard 8 foot width. Because Estabrook Road is a quiet road, the Committee felt that 6 additional spaces, commonly used at the present time, are adequate and should be counted. The implication is that these cars would be parked on the shoulder, and depending on the size of the car, may be partially on the pavement. Jeff noted that the town has now agreed to plow this area in the winter. The landowner has removed one boulder in the middle of this section which has made parking easier. For purposes of the chart, the subgroup feels there are presently 12 existing spaces.

Until the town put up the temporary no parking signs, there was the possibility of overflow parking along Estabrook Road. While we don't have parking counts, the subgroup believes that at certain times (ski days, fall weekends) in recent years the “overflow” number of cars has occasionally been as high as 25-35.

At Punkatasset, there have been 13 spaces on the road shoulder but this week a new circular driveway is being installed at the neighboring property and three or four shoulder spaces will be lost, leaving 9.

At Monument Farm, there is currently no designated parking. The DPW survey and subgroup agree that there is room for at least 10 formal or informal parking spaces near the conservation area, and perhaps more at the trail easement.

At Lowell Road/Chamberlin Woods, the subgroup believes there is room for 16 cars along the land trust frontage.

Using a draft chart, Neil outlined how we can now look at the cumulative effect of possible changes at the four locations. As examples, he outlined three scenarios for future parking spaces, projecting possible changes including a worst case scenario if access is lost at Estabrook Road, and scenarios if new spaces were to be developed in a lot at the TTOR land and/or at Monument Farm or along the shoulder of Estabrook Road. This chart can serve as a tool for looking at the overall number of spaces and seeing the impact of changes.

A number of “labeling” changes were suggested, to make clear that the data is estimated,

how the DPW surveys were used, etc.

There was a discussion of some additional options not shown on the charts, including the possibility of parking on the opposite side of Estabrook Road, or further to the south on Estabrook Road.

Delia Kaye was asked more about why parking was never built at Punkatasset after it was voted to do so in the 1970's, and where that parking might have been built. The Committee discussed the terms of the CR and deed at Punkatasset and any limitations that might apply for possible new parking there. At Monument Farms, there is no existing parking, so it is not clear how much the parking might be used and whether anything more than signage would be necessary to guide people.

Neil will update the chart. Nick expressed his thanks for the work done by the subgroup. He felt that his is what it boils down to: parking is the foundation of what our committee is trying to grapple with.

5. Estabrook Road. Using the draft worksheet that had been prepared, the Committee discussed Estabrook Road.

Neil suggested several changes to the language in the first section. He stated his understanding that the ownership of the road is not at issue: he stated that it is privately owned beyond #393. The legal disagreement is over access rights. He suggested some edits to reflect that fact, and the committee suggested using some footnotes for clarification. Keep the summary brief and clear. Neil suggested that the four worksheets have parallel construct.

There was agreement that the public does not generally understand the nuances of the Estabrook Road access situation and that having better understanding will help all parties.

The Committee listed a number of attributes and issues at the Estabrook Road access point, which have been previously been discussed. Attributes include proximity to historic Estabrook Road, wider paths, proximity to Mink Pond, availability of loop roads, etc. Issues included the questions over rights of access, dogs, trespass, parking overflow, etc. The committee then turned to possible recommendations.

The question of additional parking spaces and lifting the temporary ban were considered. More information may be needed. Peter suggested that the committee urgently recommend and communicate now to the Selectmen that the primary goal for this access point be to guarantee permanent public access. Without clarity on this issue, it will be difficult for the Committee to make a firm recommendation on parking. There was general agreement by the Committee.

After a question by Jane Hotchkiss, it was suggested that a second recommendation be that

the town and its committees work generally toward the goal of gaining, preserving, and protecting appropriate access to the Woods in all its dealings. It was noted that the driveway decision at #851 Monument Street has resulted in the loss of valuable parking without broader public discussion.

6. Polly asked the group to consider whether sticker parking or resident parking might be part of the solution. This has come up at our meetings and been suggested by some residents. Nick outlined a possible scenario – require anyone who parks at any of the Concord or Carlisle access points to apply (in person or on line) for a sticker at one of the two Town Halls. His idea is that there would be a nominal fee, given a copy of the rules and regulations, agree to them. Open to anyone, not just town residents. Getting a sticker requires effort, is educational, and gives some new accountability to the bearer of the sticker. Other members asked a different question – should there be a preference for local residents? It was noted that there seem to be ebbs and flows in usage as well as in conflicts.

After some discussion, the consensus seemed to be that both of these approaches might need to be considered in the future, but for the time being we should see if better signage, universally harmonized rules, better understanding of the nature of private ownership in the Woods, and clearer parking might address current problems. It was suggested that the Committee note this in the report, and outline some of the ideas that we think are premature, but which might be useful in the future.

7. It was suggested that another recommendation of the Committee would be to constitute an “Estabrook Council” of landowners, towns, land trusts, and others to carry on the work of this committee and to react to future issues that might arise. There was general agreement around this idea.

The impact of dogs was mentioned again. It was noted that some areas ban dogs altogether, or ban commercial dog walking. We have discussed the idea of limiting the number of dogs to two or three, but have not reached consensus on this matter. Kathy Angell mentioned again the idea of using fences to guide people near parking areas and trail heads and she would like to discuss this at a future meeting.

8. **Next Meetings.** Polly indicated that we will plan to meet until 9 am for the next few meetings.

9. **Citizen’s comments**

David Santomenna noted that any of the tools like stickers and bans require enforcement, and are very management intensive. At one TTOR property, there was an experiment with issuing dog tags and lanyards. It required a huge commitment to enforce and was ultimately found to be unworkable, unenforceable, and unsustainable. Also, Committee

might want to check whether the Forest Legacy or other state funding used to acquire land in the Woods has language about restricting public access through stickers, etc.

Marcie Berkley noted that the committee has been doing great work, but please don't forget the educational piece – help people to understand that this is a unique coalition of landowners that have provided a public benefit, and with that gift comes responsibilities by the users. She described a similar situation on land at Acadia. Elevate behavior by having users understand how special and fragile the situation is.

Paul Jameson said that he finds the idea of inhibiting the number of people entering the Woods to be objectionable. The public should have a right of access with no limits. Parking limits are infuriating, and it is the rich saying to the poor that they can limit the use. The police are doing what the neighbors want. Stickers are the same feeling. Justin responded by saying that he used to feel the same way, but that he now understands the situation better and does not agree.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 AM.

Documents consulted or reviewed at meeting:

- Four DRAFT worksheets for Punkatasset, Monument Farm, Chamberlin Woods, and Estabrook Road prepared by Sally Schnitzer
- Draft Parking Survey Chart prepared by the subgroup
- Punkatasset Conservation Restriction