

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Via Zoom Meeting

January 26, 2021, at 8:00 a.m.

Attending: Bob White (chair), Delia Kaye (Natural Resources Division), Spencer Borden, David Clarke, Carlene Hempel (scribe), Bill Kemeza, Jonathan “Jay” Keyes

Members absent: Ken Miller

Stewards present: Kathy Angell, Jim Balfour, Beth Baryiames, David Clancy, Alice Galinat, Wayne Lobb, Ned Perry, Bill Robichaud, Joe Rigali, Joseph Stein, Ted Tyson

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board); Paul Boehm (co-chair, Starmet Reuse Committee Conservation); Janet Benvenuti, Helen Bowdoin (organizer, Battle Road/Thoreau Farmhouse Connector Trail); Richard Fahlander (co-chair, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee)

Minutes: On a motion made by Spencer Borden and seconded by Jay Keyes, the minutes of the November 2020 meeting were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

STEWARD REPORTS:

Committee chairman Bob White reported that he received many emails about trails across the town that are in good shape.

Bob introduced two new stewards: Elizabeth Gudman will be covering the [Reformatory Branch Trail](#) and Moore’s Swamp with Bill Robichaud and Amity “Mickey” Wilczek will be covering the [Hapgood-Wright Town Forest](#) with David Clancy.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Starmet Reuse Committee Conservation Recommendations: Visitor Paul Boehm attended the meeting to update the committee on aspects of a report that involves potential trail work at a 46-acre site west of the Thoreau Hills, off Rte. 62, known as the former Starmet property. The committee was established in 2019 by the Select Board to review possible uses for the land, which is a Superfund site, once cleanup is complete. There are eight zones that will be presented with recommendations to the Select Board, including the 6-acre Zone “C” that will be left undeveloped for passive recreation and connectivity. Paul attended the committee meeting to solicit feedback from the committee and to alert members that there are potentially future trails the town would need to steward. Before any real planning takes place, the Select Board will need to decide whether the town should formally take ownership of the site, Paul said. Bob asked if the Trails Committee would be responsible for building any future trails on the site. Paul wasn’t sure but said he would return to the committee with that information as it becomes available to him. Steward Joe Stein asked how much of the overall site will be developed. Paul said that is up for discussion and that one option is develop none of it, though that’s unlikely, he said.

Battle Road/Thoreau Farmhouse Connector Trail Update: Bob said he has been working with Court Booth and Helen Bowdoin to build a trail from the Thoreau Farmhouse on Virginia Road to Battle Road. It's an extensive proposal and complicated by a section over Elm Brook and associated marsh. Helen thanked Bob and his crew of five volunteers for their work on January 13, which included widening and straightening the trail in some places. "What has been a tangle and a mess is now a beautiful walking path," she said. The rest of the project involves building a boardwalk, which will take time. She said she and Court are in the process of fundraising for the rest of the project, noting that a proposed bridge is the most expensive aspect, as it will have to span more than 1,000 feet of wetland.

Art Ramble 2021 Planning: The exhibit will take place again in the fall. The manager of the program is [Caroline Provost](#), who replaced Nancy Lippe at the The Umbrella Arts Center as the arts & environment program coordinator. The theme this year will be air. (Water was the theme last year.) Caroline is still seeking a curator for the project. She is also working with Delia on an art installment for Heywood Meadows on Heywood Street.

Trail Guide Book "Ecology Along Concord Trails" Update: Delia announced the book is very close to production. It will cost \$10 and will be available for sale at the Visitor's Center, the Town House and in the Natural Resources office.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Hutchins Pond at Punkatasset: Bob went to Hutchins Ponds to take a look at the overflow onto the path. He noted that the screen above the spillway is covered up with logs and debris and dams up the pond water level. Delia will contact the party who maintains the "beaver deceiver" to take care of the problem. Steward Ned Perry noted that the area is a beaver habitat and to be careful about any new projects.

New land manager: Delia said she is interviewing nine candidates for a new land manager position. She hopes to have someone in the job within four to six weeks.

October Farm: Committee member Jay Keyes again said he believes something has to be done about the oversubscribed parking at October Farm. Bob said that when Mass Audubon takes over its new property adjacent to October Farm, it will build its own lot, which will alleviate the parking issues.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Jay Keyes and seconded by Spencer Borden, the meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2021, at 8 a.m., on the town's Zoom channel.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel