

TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Via Zoom Meeting

August 25, 2020, at 8:00 a.m.

Attending: Bob White (chair), Delia Kaye (Natural Resources Division), Spencer Borden, David Clarke, Carlene Hempel (scribe), Bill Kemeza, Ken Miller

Members absent: Jonathan “Jay” Keyes

Stewards present: Kathy Angell, Beth Baryiames, David Clancy, Alice Galinat, Wayne Lobb, Ned Perry, Joe Rizzo, Bill Robichaud, Polly Stadt

Visitors: Susan Bates (liaison from the Select Board)

Minutes: On a motion made by Spencer Borden and seconded by David Clarke, the minutes of the June 2020 meeting were unanimously approved, as amended, by roll call.

STEWARD REPORTS:

Annursnac-Baptist Book Conservation Land: Trail Committee Chair Bob White introduced Pam and Mark Howell as new stewards of these trails.

Emerson-Thoreau Amble: Trail Steward Wayne Lobb reported that he has cut down knotweed on the trail and has been trimming around Heywood Meadow every week.

Hapgood Wright Town Forest: New Trail Steward Dave Clancy reported the area is in good shape. He saw one fallen tree but said he could easily take care of it. He also noted a big puddle in the parking lot. Committee member Bill Kemeza asked if the trail is open all the way to the Cambridge Turnpike. Director of Natural Resources Delia Kaye said that stretch won't be open until the Cambridge Turnpike construction is finished.

Harry Beyer Assessed Trail: Trail Steward Bill Robichaud said he noticed the sign dedicating the trail to Harry Beyer is faded and difficult to read. Delia invited Bill to touch up the sign.

Mattison Field: Trail Steward Kathy Angell said she walked the new portion of the trail and noted it was a very nice alternative way to get back to the other part of the field. Bob, too, says he has encountered people there, and said they appreciate having that new loop to walk.

Reformatory Branch: Trail Steward Bill Robichaud reported the trail to be in good shape.

West Concord Park: Trail Steward Beth Baryiames reported the trail looks good but noted the weeds at the trail head off Conant Street are hard to keep up with.

Baker Ave. Boat Launch & Picnic Area: Polly Stadt said that she could take care of watering the planter box. Bob said that would be great.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Trail Development Update:

Mattison Field: Bob said the new trail has been in use and two small new trails have been added. One features an interesting pile of glacial rocks in the corner near where the land conservation trust meets the town trail. Also, he noted a human-dug ditch that's 15 feet deep. The second trail leads off from the field where the crossover trail cuts across the field and goes into the woods where there are additional interesting glacial features and a rock outcrop.

Westvale-Harrington: Bob noted that he and Gene Delsener stabilized a bridge near the Second Division brook with some concrete blocks. They also installed a bog bridge behind the Harrington House.

Trail Guide Book Update: Delia reported that earlier this year, she asked Concord resident Richard Forman, a landscape ecologist and professor emeritus in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, to assist in her office's effort to create a trail guide book for the Town of Concord. Information from the already-existing trail guides and maps will also be included, along with illustrations. Delia said she would have a draft for review within the next month.

Wayne asked if the document will be an electronic book as well as a print book. Delia said she's not sure and sees value in both. She noted there will be a charge for the book. Bill Robichaud asked if the town will still maintain the web page with all the trail maps. Delia said yes. Ned Perry wondered about doing some promotion for the new book including a synopsis with a sample and an option to download the full thing. Delia thanked the committee for their input. Committee member David Clarke asked if there will still be trail maps in boxes at the trail heads. He said that the map/guides have been much appreciated by trail users - an average of about 1500 maps per year were taken from the two Reformatory Branch distribution boxes over the past three years. He suggested that the distributed map/guides be reduced to a single 8"x11" sheet with the trail map on one side and the cover, selected pictures and highlights, and dog regulations on the other side. The detailed history, points of interest, suggested walks, etc. should be placed in the planned trails publication that will be for sale. David emphasized that this was not a waste of paper but a valuable and available use, much better than all the paper printed but never used. Delia's response was probably not, because of the high price to print and the resources this practice expends for only one or two uses per map. Instead, she plans to maintain the QR code cards already on site that bring users to the town's trail guide website.

Conservation Land Rules and Steward Roles: Bob said stewards should avoid disputes with trail users. He said they can advise people who are using the trail inappropriately but should then back away. Delia added that the town relies on stewards to be ambassadors, to educate, but not to enforce. Also, Bob noted that Natural Resources is considering streamlining the steward reporting form because it is more complex than it needs to be.

Mass Trails Grant Update: Bob reported that the Trails Committee's attempt to secure a Mass Trails grant to rehabilitate a portion of the Old Rifle Range trail was not accepted but he and Delia are planning to apply for Community Preservation funds in 2021 for the same work.

Old Rifle Range Parking: Delia noted there have been complaints of too many people using the Old Rifle Range parking lot on Old Marlborough Road, presumably because they are new users heading to the nearby Bruce Freeman Rail Trail off Williams Road. Police have been consulted and do not favor cars parking here to access the BFRT as there is poor sight distance. Delia had signs installed that note parking is only for the Old Rifle Range conservation land. The town is looking into installing a new parking area for the rail trail users off Powder Mill Road on the other side of zigzag trail.

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

Next Meeting: The next Trails Committee meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2020, at 8 a.m., on the town's Zoom channel.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel