

Hinesburg Trails Committee Minutes

Issued: 4/22/10

Updated: 4/28/10, 4/29/10, 4/30/10

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

Place: Hinesburg Town Hall

Time: 7:00 PM

Came to order: 7:03 PM

Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Present: Colin McNaull, Lenore Budd, Launa Lagasse, Stewart Pierson, Jason Reed, Michelle Fisher, Cathy Ryan, Jane Sheldon

Unable to attend: Greg LeRoy

Special guests and Public: Peggy Jones and Patrick Coulomb

1. Minutes of the March meeting were approved.

2. Treasury Report:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Town Budget</u>			<u>Privately Raised</u>			<u>Total Available</u>
		<u>Money In</u>	<u>Money Out</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Money In</u>	<u>Money Out</u>	<u>Balance</u>	
10/1/09				\$500.00			\$ -	
10/1/2009	Contribution RM138	\$ -	\$ -	\$500.00	\$12.86		\$12.86	\$512.86
10/1/2009	Refreshments Forum			\$500.00		\$12.86	\$ -	\$500.00
11/18/2009	Refreshments			\$500.00	\$9.98	\$9.98	\$ -	\$500.00
12/14/2009	Kinko's		\$16.16	\$483.84				\$483.84
Totals			\$16.16		\$22.84	\$22.84		

3. Search for a Trails Committee Chairperson: Ideas for next chair and those volunteering should contact Colin. His last meeting as chair will be in June. He will remain on the Committee until he and his wife actually move.

4. Trail Trekking News Article for 4/28/10 dealing with the trails originating from Thistle Hill to the Russell trails is being done by Michelle Fisher.

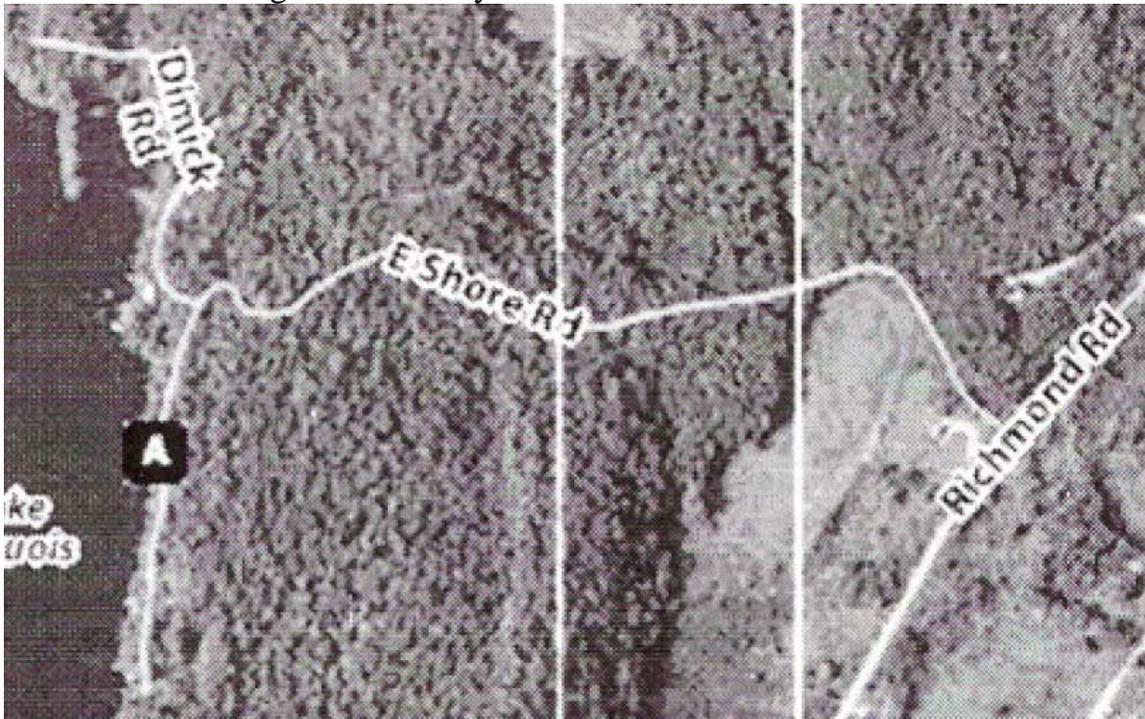
The Trail Trekking News Article for 6/2/10 is being done by Colin.

The Trails Committee is invited to an Earth Day celebration on Thursday, April 22nd at Thistle Hill which can serve as a jumping off point to walk the new Sullivan Trail, recently completed by the Thistle Hill Developer, Bart Frisbee.

We need to develop a Trekking masthead for the Hinesburg Record.

5. Public Comment:

Peggy Jones and Patrick Columb living at 655 East Shore Lane attended the Trail Committee seeking help in stopping a stream of people crossing their property who claim there is a trail there. (Including the CVU track team) They have a small lot close to Lake Iroquois. They have sought help from the Police Dept. in the past but received none. Map is shown below and their camp is location "A". Their home is used four months of the year. Although they inform these trespassers that no trail exists, they pay no attention. Trail Committee suggests talking with Jeanne Wilson who in the past has furnished a "To whom it may concern" letter stating that there is no town trail on this private road only. This has worked for some of the residents on this private road in the past. They were also advised to contact the new Police Chief to express their concerns and need for assistance as well as contacting CVU concerning CVU runners. This has been a problem for residents in this area that has come and gone over the years.



6. Report for Planning Commission - COMPLETION OF TOWN PLAN

Planning Commission work which involves the Trails Committee: "trail dreams" have been sought by planning to be included in the updated Town Plan. Committee members were encouraged to attend the PC meeting on 4/28 and 5/26

where the Committee's draft text and map for the 2010 Town Plan will be presented and discussed.

Our submission to Planning is shown below:

- Draft Trails Text for 2010 Town Plan

(revised 4/7/10; revisions in green)

Mission of the Trails Committee

In 2007 the Select Board established the Hinesburg Trails Committee, charging it with the mission “to support the development and maintenance of an interlocking set of trails and dirt roads for recreational and non-motorized transportation uses. The Committee will work to assure that Hinesburg is a community where sidewalks, trails, and unpaved roads provide a safe way for residents to travel, to connect with each other, and to enjoy both the village and surrounding rural area by foot, bicycle, and on horseback.”

Existing Trails and Sidewalks

Within and proximate to the village area, sidewalks and bike lanes provide alternate transportation options between the village and commercial centers, creating a friendly, walkable community.

Outside the village area, unpaved roads and trails provide opportunities for walking, biking, horseback riding, skiing, and snowshoeing. Both formal and informal trail networks exist within both state owned and locally conserved parcels and between village and rural residential centers. The primary trail networks are within the “Old” Town Forest, the new LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest and Copp-Welch conserved area, the Russell Trails, and Geprags Park. With the exception of the many mountain bike trails in the “Old” Town Forest created and maintained by the Fellowship of the Wheel, and the snowmobile trails created and maintained by a member club of VAST (VT Assoc. of Snow Travelers) most trails came into being gradually and informally over many years without a plan and without adherence to any trail standards. In addition there are many trails on private land that can only be accessed with permission of the landowner. Connectivity between these various trail networks is limited.

One of the major transportation and recreation challenges facing Hinesburg is to stitch together the existing sidewalks, unpaved roads, public trails, and private trails into a safe, well thought out, interconnected system. The challenge is exacerbated by 1) the Trails Committee’s lack of authority and training to negotiate legal agreements (e.g. revocable permission and permanent easements) with landowners, 2) existing paved roads, which deter travel by foot, bicycle, and horseback because, almost without exception, they lack sidewalks, bike lanes, wide shoulders, signage, etc., and 3) lack of legal access to private unpaved roads for purposes of public, non-motorized recreation.

Future Sidewalks and Trails

Future sidewalks and trails in the Village are shown on the Official Map adopted by the Select Board in 2009.

In 2004 a sub-committee of the Recreation Committee began the process of planning a town-wide trail network. Among other things, this sub-committee prepared a 2006 report and series of maps identifying major gaps in the existing system. In 2007, the Select

Board-appointed Committee picked up where the previous sub-committee left off. In 2009 the Committee sought public input via a trails charrette, which focused on identifying residents' priority recreational destinations and connections. What has begun to emerge is the **vision** of a trail network that looks a bit like a wagon wheel with the village being the hub, a peripheral trail near the town boundaries as the rim, and connections between the village and the peripheral trail serving as the spokes. The "rim" trail would connect popular destinations such as the "Old" Town Forest, the LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest and adjacent conserved lands, the Raven Ridge Preserve, and Geprags Park. The "spokes" would emanate from the Village out to these same destinations via the Russell Trails, Buck Hill Road, Gilman Rd., Baldwin Rd., Leavensworth Rd., and future trail segments and paved roads improvements. **This vision for a town-wide network of trails is manifested on the map entitled "Trail Network Vision: Existing Routes and Gaps."** Implementing this vision will rely heavily on the permission and goodwill of many private landowners.

Suggested changes and additions to goals and objectives in the 2005 Plan

Objective 3.4 To strive for safe and well-designed transportation systems; to develop and expand a sidewalk network; and to encourage development of alternative systems such as trails, bike paths and greenways.

Objective 3.4 To strive for safe and well-designed transportation systems including an interconnected network of sidewalks, trails, bike paths, and greenways.

Recreation

5.4.1) To optimize management and use of existing Town recreational facilities and programs.

- Maintain ownership and control of the Town Forests and the Geprags Park areas. **Develop and implement management plans that balance recreational use of the Old Town Forest and Geprags Park with the protection of their natural resources.** **Explore** Improve mapping of the recreational access to these areas.
- Investigate posting or other measures to reduce the adverse impacts of ATVs, mountain bikes and similar recreational uses in the Town Forest during periods of thaw and heavy rain. *If a management plan is developed and implemented it's unnecessary to include this single element in the Town Plan.*
- Explore creation of an Official Map and/or Capital Program that includes present and desired future recreation areas and facilities. **Create an Official Map that includes present and desired future recreation areas, facilities, and trails.**
- Evaluate Town recreational needs in cooperation with the school to allow for joint use whenever possible.
- Make Recreational activities easily accessible to pedestrians by linking the resources of the Town Hall, playing fields, schools, parks, and the Library.
- Recognize that class 3&4 dirt roads are used extensively for recreational activities such as walking, biking, and horseback riding. Ensure that these uses are considered when road improvements are made. Maintain public access to all town road corridors, active or inactive.

- Work with the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife to facilitate use of state-owned land for recreation and hunting, **including the development of trails.**
- **With landowner approval,** develop a trail system connecting all public lands, **private conserved lands (when appropriate), and public trail easements.**

5.4.2) To seek additional recreational facilities to serve Town residents.

- Conduct a study of current and future recreational needs and identify locations for parks and other facilities, paying particular attention to high-density residential areas. Coordinate with willing landowners to explore recreational uses on privately conserved lands (e.g., land trust holdings).
- Identify and plan for recreational paths that link residential areas to the Village (see also 6.7).
- **Develop legal mechanisms and landowner incentives) for securing public trail access to private lands, e.g. revocable landowner permission and permanent trail easements.**
- **Explore mechanisms for making private unpaved roads available for public, non-motorized recreation.**
- **Work with the local snowmobile club to open snowmobile trails in Hinesburg to skiers and snowshoers.**

Transportation

Sidewalks and Bike Lanes: Within and proximate to the village area, sidewalks and bike lanes provide alternate transportation options between the village and commercial centers, creating a friendly, walkable community.

Rural Footpaths: Outside the village areas, both formal and informal networks of trails exist within both **state publicly owned** and locally conserved parcels and between village and rural residential centers. *Most state owned land is NOT conserved, i.e. not protected by conservation easements. One important component of these networks is the VAST (VT Assoc. of Snow Travelers) trail system for snowmobilers. VAST trails do not fit under the heading of "Rural Footpaths." Landowner permission has been obtained only for WINTER access by SNOWMOBILES (i.e. not for walking, skiing, snowshoeing.)*

While the majority of transportation concerns challenging Hinesburg are due to motor vehicle traffic, alternative transportation networks such as sidewalks, bike paths, footpaths and trails also must be addressed to create a more walkable, friendly community. (p. 54) **In many instances paved roads are impediments to non-motorized transportation because they provide no accommodation for pedestrians, cyclists, etc.**

6.2) To drive the improvement of Hinesburg's arterial highways, insuring the safety and efficiency of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout the town and particularly, inside the village.

- Work with the State to Implement the Route 116 Scoping Study Recommendations for Route 116 from Buck Hill through to Silver Street, as well as curbing, road cut limitations, sidewalks, parking, utility and street tree recommendations throughout Hinesburg Village. These recommendations address traffic calming through street and intersection narrowing, environmental factors and intersection modification.

- Whenever improvements to major paved roads (e.g. Rte, 116, Silver Street, or the Richmond Road, etc.) are undertaken, include appropriate accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists such as sidewalks, bike lanes, or widened shoulders.
- When appropriate, coordinate road improvements and path development with adjoining towns (e.g. Charlotte).

6.4) To guide improvements to the village transportation infrastructure that encourage a more pedestrian and business-friendly community while improving the efficiency of vehicular traffic flow.

- Implement suggestions from the Route 116 scoping study for the village to create a walkable community
- Investigate providing additional crosswalks, cross walk markers / signage at the town hall, and other points.
- Implement current plans for bike paths between Commerce Street and Ballard's Corners.
- Develop a sidewalk or recreation path system along Richmond Road from CVU to Texas Hill Road to connect existing high-density residential areas to village infrastructure.

6.5) To develop policies that solicit community input on maintenance and improvement of Hinesburg's rural roads, balance rural transportation improvements with Hinesburg's rural planning goals and augment Hinesburg's arterial highways and rural arteries.

- Consider upgrading class IV roads to class III roads to benefit town connectivity and create alternate transportation paths between arterial highways and rural arteries
- Improve selected Class IV roads to function better as recreation and alternate transportation paths as components of the town-wide trail network.

6.7) To encourage the development and use of alternative transportation networks throughout the rural areas of Hinesburg.

- Coordinate the formation of Develop a system of footpaths and trails throughout the town in conjunction with the rural development portions of this plan.
- Include provisions in the Subdivision and Zoning Regulations to protect or conserve right of ways for current or future trail connections identified as important by the Town. Develop a map of current and desired future trail networks with substantial public input to aid this process.
- Develop legal mechanisms to allow public non-motorized recreational use of private, unpaved roads to facilitate connectivity between existing and planned trail segments.

Top 10 Priority Goals & Recommendations

- Create a truly walkable Village by improving crosswalks as well as adding and improving sidewalks (3.2.3 & 6.4f,g)
 - *Timeline: Crosswalks - 1 year; Sidewalks - 2-3 years*

- *Responsible Parties: Selectboard, Village Steering Committee, VT Agency of Transportation, Trails Committee*
- **Plan for the formation of** Create a system of trails throughout the rural areas with connections to residential developments, the Village, and public lands throughout town (6.7a)
 - *Timeline: 3 years*
 - *Responsible Parties: Trails Committee, Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission.*

One "trail dream": To be given permission to place the recently built FOTW trail between Town Forest and Hollow Road on town trail maps accessible by all Hinesburg residents. Currently, the trails are on FOTW maps only accessible to FOTW members. These trails cross land owned by the Carse family. A letter will be sent to Dr. Ralph Carse to seek permission, while discussing the situation with the FOTW. Last summer the trails committee walked these trails.

Lenore, Jason, and Steve recently met with Mr. David Carse about filling possible trail "voids." David had many good ideas about the future of trails in Hinesburg, and offered crucial insight into approaching landowners. David also shared some illegal trail building that has happened on land owned by the Carse family. This is discouraging for the land owner(s), as well as for legitimate trail creation efforts for the future.

Should "trail dreams", the blank spots in the dream network that would connect the dots be indicated on a map cross private land without prior knowledge of the owner? The answer was that it would be better to inform property owners in advance of these "dreams." Another alternative would just be to leave these areas blank.

The FOTW, Catamount Trail Association, Green Mountain Club and VAST organizations have the advantage of not being associated with any form of government when they ask landowners for their permission to cross their property so that a trail network can be constructed or completed.

7. Lenore emphasized the need for the committee to settle on a Landowner Permission form and a separate Trail Easement form, both that can be vetted by the town attorney and then approved by the Selectboard. Can we use the one developed by the UVM group, the FOTW, the Catamount Trail Association, the Green Mountain Club, one suggested by the state or do we need to develop custom forms uniquely suited to the needs of Hinesburg property owners?

8. How will the new zoning regulations being developed by the Planning Commission affect us? Need to attend the April 28 and May 26 meetings. The same will apply as the DRB deals with updating two rural development area

changes with the thrust of giving a developer a more immediate answer on his/her development plans.

9. TRAIL WORK DAY JUNE 5: POSSIBLE PROJECTS

a) Provide entry kiosk for Russell trails perhaps behind the ball field; giving the proper credits. Other signs are needed for Russell and now completed Thistle Hill trails.

b) Repair muddy places on Russell Trails?

[Incidental comment: signs should be of good quality.]

c) The Hinesburg Land Trust has money to put up special signage involved in the acquisition of the LHTF and the Russell Trails which are in addition to the ideas we discussed.

d) Jason will be in charge of the kiosk project and will also be working to get details from the Hinesburg Land Trust on what exactly they want to do, where and when.

e) Jane has some ideas for National Trails Day involving children and families and how they can help. Other committee members have latent work projects for worker bees that we can draw from the people of Hinesburg who use the trails.

10. Eagle's Trail, north east loop and north south route hike from Hayden Hill East entrance to Economou Road entrance with Mike Snyder scheduled for Monday, April 26.

Next meeting date: 5/19/10

(Third Wednesday of the month)

Submitted by Stewart Pierson, Secretary

Mission: The mission of the Hinesburg Trails Committee is to support the development and maintenance of an interlocking set of trails and dirt roads for recreational and non-motorized transportation uses. The Committee will work to assure that Hinesburg is a community where sidewalks, trails, and unpaved roads provide a safe way for residents to travel, to connect with each other, and to enjoy both the village and surrounding rural area by foot, bicycle, and on horseback.