



Trails Committee

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes - August 17, 2016

- Approved 9/21/16 -

Present: Ray Mainer, Jane Sheldon, Lenore Budd, Peter Modley, Oren Guttman, Sue Rusten, and Chic McArthur
Guests: Steve Fischer (Fellowship of the Wheel), Paul Nadeau (FOTW), Pat Mainer (Town Forest Committee), Marian Wilmott, Peter Habitz, Mary Ellen Habitz

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Minutes** – For the May minutes (which had not been approved due to lack of a quorum at the previous meeting in June) Peter made a motion to accept them, Oren seconded and the motion was passed unanimously. Sue made a motion to accept the June minutes, Peter seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
2. **Budget** – Lenore reported that so far in this fiscal year we have spent \$68.48 for bridge materials and fuel which leaves us with \$1681.52.
3. **Hinesburg Town Forest (HTF)** – Robyn Leffler had posted a concern on Front Porch Forum about mountain bike trails in the HTF. Lenore had responded by inviting her to attend our August meeting to discuss those concerns.
 - a. **Gravel** – Robyn did not attend but Marianne Willmott said that she thought Robyn objected to a gravel path that had recently been built. Steve Fisher said it was probably on private Carse lands, not in the HTF. A project had been undertaken there which needed a large amount of work and Robyn may have seen it before it was finished. Steve reported that any disruption she may have seen has now been fixed. Pat Mainer said there was gravel work near the Hayden Hill East entrance on the Eagle's Trail which also needed to be fixed. Lenore pointed out that the management plan for the HTF does not preclude bringing in outside materials for repair.
 - b. **Additional Trails** – Marian said that Robyn may have also had concern that more trails are going in. Steve said that FOTW have actually closed some. Any work Robyn may have thought was building new ones was only to improve existing trails to avoid erosion.
 - c. **Changes in Trail Width** – Marian questioned the width of some trails in places, thinking bikes may have enlarged them going wide around wet spots or corners. Lenore pointed out that hikers going off trail to avoid muddy areas contributes as well. Steve said he'd offer FOTW labor to bring trails back to spec.
 - d. In Robyn's absence the discussion on her concerns was concluded.

- e. Peter pointed out that the HTF plan says no new trails can be added unless it is a reroute around fallen barriers or erosion. Peter asked Pat if that was a hard and fast rule. Pat said that nothing is ever concrete, but that the sentiment is that we have enough already.
- 4. Geprags Mowing** – The Conservation Commission (CC) is using a DR field mower to take care of the trails. Field mowing bids are being obtained for the upper field, but the lower field on the west side of the park will likely be left unmowed. Chic asked if VT Gas could give money to maintain the trails. Lenore reported there is nothing in the contract with the town to require it. Chic is encouraged to review some of the agreements still being worked on re the wetland to see if there is any way wording could be included.
- 5. SCHIP Grant** – We had compiled a list of tools to be reviewed for purchase from this grant. Lenore suggested purchasing a Stihl brush cutter, replacement blades, helmet, ear protectors and other items for use with it instead. The total would come to approximately \$500. Lenore estimates it would get used 10 – 12 times a year, and we would finally be able to get to several areas in Geprags and Eagle’s Trail which become overgrown every year because we haven’t had the tools. She pointed out that the machine is light weight and easily transported from site to site in the back of a car. Sue made a motion to use the grant to purchase the brush cutter, Ray seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
- 6. Update on Trail Maintenance** –
- a. LaPlatte Headwaters - The Bissonette loop in the LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest (LHTF) needs erosion control on the south and west sides. Sue will talk to Peter VanVranken to see if he’s looked at it and if it can be rerouted. Sue and Oren will walk the area and review the management plan to make sure any changes can be made. Sue reported that the area that was rerouted National Trails day was holding up, at least until the recent rain.
 - b. Geprags has a cross trail that needs to be cleared. We’ve already closed one so we decided to keep it this one open. Lenore will flag it and set up a work party.
 - c. Ray’s two bridges on the Russell Trail are complete.
 - d. Ravine Trail - Lenore has gotten a preliminary design and estimate from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp (VYCC) to cross the Ravine gulch with raised wooden stairs and bridge for \$25,000. A possible way to pay for the project would be a VT Recreation Trails Fund Grant, which would cover 80% of project costs. Sue volunteered to help with grant writing (pre-application due December 2 with the final application due February 1) if that's the direction the Committee decides to go. We’d have to find funding for the remaining 20%. Lenore is still trying to find a time when Josh Ryan can meet with her to get a second bid.
 - e. Peter Habitz attended tonight to point out some specific areas where maintenance is needed in the HART system. He was asked to send the list to Lenore so we could review it at the next meeting.
- 7. Trail Easement** – The HLT has agreed to grant the town a trail easement on its “Gillespie parcel.” Lenore will draft an easement based on the TCs template for all to review.

8. **Sleepy Hollow** – The connector trail to Magee Hill is nearly a reality. Eli Enman, of Sleepy Hollow, has rough-cut a new mile of trail on his land to complete the route. FOTW and Trails Committee volunteers have been working to grade and shape this new section. TC members will be alerted any time the FOTW has a workday and needs volunteers to help finish the trail.
9. **Fall Festival** – The festival is on September 24th this year. Sally Reiss hasn't contacted Lenore yet about whether the main hall will be showcasing town committees this year as it did last. Jane will liaise with Sally to see if the TC will need to organize an info table again.
10. **Record Articles** – George is writing the September article, and Stewart will be asked to write one for October.
11. **Kiosk Replacement** – Geprags needs a new kiosk. It is a nesting place for wasps and ants, and has deteriorated badly. Ray has already committed to building 3 kiosks. Jane offered to call Alison Lesure of the CC to see if the commission will replace it.
12. **Map Revisions** – Chic asked if there was a source of elevations, length of trails, etc, and if so could that info be added to the trail maps. The web site has a description of data but not specific to each trail. Chic has gathered the data on his GPS. Sue offered to take Chic's info and put it onto the site.
13. **Economou Road Entrance** – Peter has been putting maps in the Economou kiosks and reported that the spur from the end of the road to the trail head parking area is still very hard to traverse. Lenore had been in touch with Mike Anthony re fixing this section of the entrance but was told that the only time any maintenance can be done is during logging in Town Forest. Ray mentioned he thought there might be some logging work coming up soon and that might be an opportunity for improving the spur.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

The next meeting will be held on September 21st

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Sheldon, Secretary