



Trails Committee

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
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Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2017

- Approved 12/20/17 -

Present: Jane Sheldon, Stewart Pierson, Lenore Budd, George Dameron, Sue Rusten, Ray Mainer, Oren Guttman

Regrets: Peter Modley, Chic McArthur

Guest: Mike Bissonette

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

1. **Minutes** – Ray made a motion to accept the draft minutes from the October meeting, Stewart seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
2. **Budget** – Oren purchased two Fisker folding saws and rope since the last meeting reducing the \$750 in our funds by an amount to be reported at the December meeting.
3. **Grant Application for Buck Hill Parking Area** – Peter has been able to obtain one estimate for approximately \$8000. We will need two more before we can award a contract, however this gives us a minimum amount for Lenore to ask the Select Board next Monday to agree to the 20% match from the town in order to apply for a grant from the Vermont Recreational Trails Program. She will also investigate whether the town is willing to supply the gravel and/or the culvert as its contribution in lieu of cash. We will need a commitment so we can meet the preliminary application deadline of December 1st.
4. **Storm Damage**
 - a. **Russell Trails** - Last Saturday several members of the Trails Committee (TC) along with many volunteers were able to clear the blow-down from the late October wind storm from the Russell and Sullivan Trails. Good work team! Many of the trees had held the trail blazes so those will need to be replaced.
 - b. **LaPlatte Headwater Town Forest (LHTF)** - Sue reports that this area also will require quite a bit of work and suggests we tackle it next, since Gegrags has been cleared and the Hinesburg Town Forest has most of its trails open. She offered to organize a work day for us, and with Peter VanVranken and his volunteer group in December, tentatively Saturday, December 2nd.
 - c. **Hinesburg Town Forest (HTF)** – The area in this forest that still requires clearing is on the Eagle’s Trail just north of the Economou Road entrance.

5. **Connecting Route 116 to the Rec. Field** – The fields are scheduled to open in the spring. In order to do so the Development Review Board requires a pedestrian access from Route 116 on the town’s temporary easement. Jane will contact Joe Bissonette to lay out the route.
6. **High Rock Trail** – The Gallagher property, on which the best route to the scenic overlook lies, is up for sale. On behalf of the Hinesburg Land Trust, Andrea Morgante had approached the owners about conserving a portion or all of the property, but has received no response. Similarly, Lenore has gotten no response to her email to the Gallaghers re: simple permission for a public trail or a trail easement. An easement on the southern boundary of that property would also provide an alternate to Harry Russell’s driveway as an access point. Lenore will continue to investigate these possibilities.
7. **Mike Bissonette’s Suggestion** – Mike attended the meeting to follow up on a written suggestion made to all the town committees that the town creates a new administrative position. The person hired would act as a liaison among the committees and support them in other ways. He estimated that such a part-time position would cost \$16,000 of new spending by the town. George asked if the Assistant Town Administrator (ATA), currently being recruited, would be able to fill the duties. Mike said that there was enough other responsibilities to keep Renae, the Town Administrator (TA), and ATA busy already. Lenore reported that Renae had suggested that there be a quarterly meeting of all the committee chairs to coordinate activities, prioritize projects and make sure the town plan is being implemented. Sue indicated that creating this position is a personnel issue for the Select Board to consider if tasks are not being done or not getting done in a timely manner. Mike said that since the budget process was going on currently it would be timely to ask for this position now. Lenore suggested that we give Renae and the new ATA time to settle in to her new responsibilities and see if the quarterly meetings work before moving ahead with additional staff.
8. **Upcoming Events** – Lenore suggested that she could invite Mark LaBar from the Audubon Society to hold an event in the spring where a mist net could be installed in Gegrags to catch and release birds. Jane said that this type of hands-on experience would appeal to kids. Lenore will pursue this idea with the Conservation Commission and Vermont Audubon. Sue commented that there are bats in the LHTF and that it would be a good spot to do a bat walk/talk. Lenore suggested that a mist net could also be used to catch bats there. Oren thought this would be a good opportunity to get the Girl Scouts, who presented their bat house project to the TC, to be involved as well. He will get in touch with the group.
9. **Rope Repurchase** – Stewart offered to buy back the rope that the TC had purchased for the Ravine Trail for \$100 for his personal use. The request was approved.
10. **Term Expiration Date** – Peter is the only TC member whose term is up as of January, 2018. Lenore will ask him if he plans to seek re-appointment. There are five of us with terms expiring in 2019 so we may want to think about staggering expiration dates.

11. Website/Brochure – Sue has finished editing and updating the text for these two communication pieces. She will send the text file to Oren for him to insert the photos and logo into the brochure. Lenore will work with Oren to finalize this effort.

12. Articles for the Record – Sue graciously offered to quickly write the article for this month's issue so we could report on our efforts cleaning up the damage from the windstorm. The article that Jane wrote can now be used for the next issue (January). George will write the one for February.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December 20th.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Sheldon, Secretary