



Trails Committee

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
802.482.2281 | hinesburg.org

Meeting Minutes - September 19, 2018

- Draft -

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

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

1. **Minutes** – Sue made a motion to approve the minutes from the August meeting, Chic seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
2. **Budget** – There have been no expenses since the last meeting so our available funds remain at \$750.
3. **Update on Town Forest**
 - a. **Snowmobiles** - Stewart reported that the last Town Forest Committee's (TFC) discussion as to whether to allow snowmobiling in the Hinesburg Town Forest (HTF) is still ongoing, but that the committee has not ruled it out. They will make a recommendation but the final decision would be up to the Select Board. Lenore suggested that pedestrian usage of the portions of the snowmobile trail crossing private land be made a condition of allowing the snowmobile trail within the Town Forest. Lenore will liaise with Pat Mainer on this issue.
 - b. **Logging** – The bidding process for logging in the HTF is in progress. Work is expected to begin in January or February 2019, when the ground is frozen, and continue those months in 2020 if needed. The access point will be the Economou Road entrance. Part of the Eagle's Trail will be closed during logging activity as will some Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW) maintained trails. How do we get the Economou Road extension to the trail head improved? Peter mentioned that it is usually required in contracts that any roads used by contractors be brought up to standard after use. This would be our recommendation. If it is too late then it is Lenore's understanding from talking to Ethan Tapper, the County Forester, and Pat Mainer is that revenue from the logging could be used for improvements to Economou Road once the logging is completed.
 - c. **Usage Counts** – Lenore showed us the results of the usage study conducted by the TFC. Number of annual users (projected from sampled days) seemed high but it does indicate that the TF is getting quite a bit of traffic.

4. Geprags Management Plan – This is the first written management plan that the Trails Committee has seen. Lenore suggested that it is a very helpful document as the TC continues to try to coordinate its trail management responsibilities within the CC’s overall responsibility for Geprags Park. She will forward to the CC the following suggestions and questions about the draft plan:

- a. Zone 1: 1G- Make it clearer as to what “leasing” involves, e.g. education or revenue generation.
- b. Zone 4: 4A –We suggest that the 2-times/year mowing be done by professionals (currently Wahl Landscaping) all the way up to the forest on the Hill Spur Trail.
- c. Section IV:
 - i. Make sure the TC is exempt from having to obtain permission to use power tools in Geprags.
 - ii. Add mountain bikes and horses as prohibited along with motorized vehicles
- d. Section V
 - i. Dogs 1 - Add that signage will be placed at the parking area as well as the kiosk to show where dogs are to be allowed and where prohibited.
 - ii. Dogs 2 - Remove reference to “nearly impossible to enforce,” and include a reference to the town dog ordinance and penalties for non-compliance.

5. Fall Trail Maintenance

- a. Russell Trails –
 - i. George says there is need for lopping on the perimeter trail. He will contact Howdy Russell to see if there are plans to mow the SE section and if not, he will organize a work party.
 - ii. Stewart and Lenore will investigate sprucing up the parking area on Buck Hill near Route 116 to make it more user friendly.
- b. Geprags –
 - i. George reported that the Hill Spur trail is heavily overgrown. Chic has since cut this back with the weed whacker. (See 4b in these minutes.)
 - ii. Lenore and Chic will scout and flag a less steep and erosion-prone route for the trails in Zone 5 as well as an entrance into the park from Shelburne Falls Road, and then liaise with the CC for approval.
 - iii. We discussed closing part of the Hill Spur trail loop decided the best option was to extend the dead-end section uphill to the outside of the loop, then close the now middle section. We will need to check out a reroute to minimize erosion on the new steep section. Lenore will liaise with Mike Bissonette as to our suggestion once the reroute is determined.
- c. LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest (LPHTF) –
 - i. Sue will check with Peter VanVranken to see if he is planning on mowing the hidden meadow perimeter trail.

- d. Lincoln Hill to Hollow Road Connection** – Lenore would like to scout out a possible HART route from the HTF via Lincoln Hill to the Hollow Road using existing snowmobile and logging roads through the Fred Johnson Wildlife Management Area as much as possible. She'll set a date and invite others to help with scouting. Opening a formal pedestrian trail through the WMA would require permission from VT Fish & Wildlife.
- 6. Budget Request** – It's that time of the year when we need to put in our request for the next fiscal year's budget for the TC. We are to think about any upcoming building projects which may need more funding than our usual allocation would cover. Oren suggested that improving the drainage of the SE corner of the Russell Perimeter Trail would require technical assistance from a trail professional, such as Josh Ryan or the VYCC. We will discuss the budget issue at the next meeting.
- 7. Upcoming Events** – Lenore will be attending the VT Outdoor Recreation conference on October 10th and 11th at Lake Morey Resort. If anyone wants to join her. She also reminded us of the HTF walk with County Forester, Ethan Tapper at 1:00 p.m., September 29th meeting at the Hayden Hill West Parking lot,
- 8. Record Articles** – Chic is writing the one for October and Sue the one for November. There is no December issue.
- 9. Thank You Letters** – Two people have thanked Lenore for the letters we sent to landowners and volunteer groups. They have been well received.
- 10. Grants** – Jane reported that the grants she saw mentioned on local news for improving Class IV roads is for water quality improvement, so may not be applicable to our need to improve the connection between the Hayden Hills East and West (HHE/HHW). In any case the deadline for this year has passed.
- 11. Need for more information at Kiosks** – Jane reported that when restocking maps at HHW last week she met 5 trucks with about 20 bikers from Quebec who asked lots of questions as to where they could get lunch (and especially local beer!). She gave them directions to Rte 116 and told them of all the places to eat but wasn't sure if Frost Beer Brewing was offering tastings at lunch. Jane will contact Andrew Frost who is also Chair of the Economic Development Committee to see if there can be more "in town" information available at the kiosks, as that committee had previously expressed enthusiasm for taking on this project.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17th.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Sheldon, Secretary