

## Open Space Committee Meeting 1/27/2020

Members Present: David Schochet, Larry Flaccus, Tom Johnson, Jim Perry, Norm Beebe, Joel Dwight

Guests: Bob Higgins, Lara Radysh, Art Schwenger

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm

The minutes from Dec 23, 2019 were reviewed and accepted.

David asked for new agenda items to be offered to the agenda. None offered.

**Mohican - Mohawk Trail Update:** David recognized Bob Higgins and Lara Radysh who had come to the meeting to share their concerns about having the proposed South Maple St entrance to the Trail and the trail extension over town land close to their property. **David** gave a brief history of our efforts to build an extension of the M-M Trail and to provide town access to it. **Larry** explained that the OSC is approaching the project in three phases: **one**, from FLT property (where the Trail now ends) to Town owned property starting below the Sweetheart; **two**, access to the trail from So Maple St and then across town property upstream toward the center of the village; **three**, the short stretch over very difficult terrain to meet Deerfield Ave. **Norm** pointed out the Lillian Davenport property was gifted to the town and was a place Village residents could use as a recreational area, and that he thought mostly village residents would be the users. **Tom** added that we are planning for a geo technical survey for the portion below Bridge St and we hope that it will be connected to Deerfield Ave as the third segment. **Lara and Bob** were very concerned that the segments might never be connected, and shared their opinion that the Deerfield Ave segment should be the first to be done. **Larry** asked if their opposition was to the access from South Maple St or to the Trail in general. **Bob and Lara** said any access to the river would mean many people will come in to use it, so he and Lara are opposed to the Trail if it is not being connected as a through trail. If it is a dead-end, they don't see it as a link to other trails, but a destination in itself that may never be linked to the other segments and that the monies available should be used on the more difficult section of the trail first. They feared that the project as proposed would significantly and

negatively impact their lives and that there was no guarantee that this project would ever be completed as a through trail. **Lara** then suggested we consider **access from Wilcox Hollow**. **Jim added** that we need to work at the project in phases (depending on funding availability and access permissions) and the section to Wilcox Hollow is part of the process. **Bob** reiterated that he sees starting building in the middle is the wrong way to go and would like us to focus on one end or the other. **David** told them we understood why this is of great importance to them, and thanked them for their comments and input.

**David** then asked us to look at our options for alternatives to trail access going forward, inviting the members who were able to visit the site recently to discuss what they saw. The **various options we then discussed** were:

1.- the old roadway that leads from the break in the guardrail (east of the Sweetheart). **Art** told us the Hanfords were initially disinclined about the long portion of the trail stretching through their property, but that **they were perhaps open to giving access down that old road to the trail**. **Larry** said he was concerned about the ability of Hanfords to revoke access to the trail on relatively short notice if we didn't have an easement. **Art answered** that 5 or 10 year easements were troubling for the landowner... Art would like to begin his contact with Hanfords by sending a map that shows using the old road access to the trail from the guardrail break, east of the Sweetheart. **Jim** said the old road access up the bank was very doable.. . Norm thought that coming in off Route 2 at that point would be an acceptable way to access the trail.

2.-access from South Maple diagonally in from the Sweetheart's stone wall. **Bob and Lara** added that they have a clear view of that spot from their home, and that too would be a negative.

3.-Norm then spoke about **Stefan Topolski's property** and wondered if there was a way to shield hikers from view of the houses nearby if they accessed from Stefan's gate. **Tom** said the folks in his neighborhood would like to see a river trail but would be very opposed to access from Stefan's gate. **Art told us** a quick answer from Jane Hanford's son was not going to happen and he would contact them with the proposed old road access on a map.

**Decision: The group then voted to first pursue the old road option to enable access to the trail on town property; the power line right of way would be a backup and the long trail across Hanfords a third option.**

**Larry thought that if we receive** the MTWP grant, we may be able to use it on a Deerfield Ave geo survey or on a Wooded Loop extension out to Summit Drive. (Tom gave Larry the name of an engineering firm from Amherst that would bid on the survey of crossing the difficult area behind Bridge St)

**Decision: Tom made a motion to get a cost estimate for a geo technical survey to cross the rough area behind Bridge St from Deerfield Ave. The motion passed unanimously.**

Follow-up: Larry said he could talk with Bob O'Connor about the flexibility of usage of the MTWP grant money. David noted the need to know quickly about Hanfords approval of the use of the old road.

**Larry reported** that we received a \$300 dollar grant from the Cultural Council, \$100 from the Rec Committee and \$250 from Open Space Committee to procure educational signs, and to create trail maps and brochures. **Larry** suggests a **brochure and map for each separate trail** with the trail map on one side and the other side with topics related to the trail, trail etiquette, and crossing private land. We may also have some 8 1/2 x 11 signs made. **Larry and Jim** are working on locations to place trial kiosks. Jim thinks kiosks could be made for \$300 or less. **Larry** mentioned we have \$1200 from the Woodland Partnership for printing. **Tom** wondered if we would be interested in putting our signs on a LIDAR base. Jim will get maps to Tom, so he can get LIDAR equivalents for comparisons. **Larry** is working on the **mock up of brochures** and how the various topics will be presented on them.

Larry will talk to John Taylor about the **ZBA process**, and hopes we can receive a waiver from the technical requirements for a municipal trail. **David and Larry** plan to attend the Feb 6<sup>th</sup> ZBA meeting for an informal informational session before we

make an application and plan. Larry will send a letter requesting to be put on their agenda. Tom told us the Planning Board is already on the ZBA agenda.

David asked if anyone was interested in attending **the Keystone Forestry Training** at the Harvard Forest from Thurs evening April 2 to Sunday afternoon April 6.

There will be an **Open Space Conference Sat April 25 at GCC** organized by the Mt Grace Land Trust they wondered if we might send a representative to speak at the meeting about the various things we are doing here in Shelburne.

**Hilltown Land Trust** is going to have three informational conservational networking events to let folks in different towns get to meet one another in Western Franklin County , Hampshire County and Hampden County. More details to come.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Dwight, Secretary Pro-Tem