

Open Space Meeting Minutes --March 30, 2020

Meeting called to order 7:00 pm. Meeting held via teleconference.

Members present: David Schochet, Larry Flaccus, Tom Johnson, Jim Perry, Garth LaPointe, Norm Beebe, John Wheeler, Joel Dwight

Feb Meeting minutes reviewed and accepted with one abstaining

David asked for **additions to the meeting** agenda. **Garth volunteered** to take people on a hike at the Wooded Loop Trail to look at possible extensions to the Trail.

Ongoing business –

Regarding the Deerfield Ave end of the project: Landowner contacts--

David told us we were experiencing a lack of communication from the **Hanfords**, which is keeping us from making any progress re: access from either end of their property

David spoke with **Pat Kilgallen** (owner of the former Singley property), and he signed our agreement allowing us to access his property; he's open to discussing a future easement, but he'll probably want to consult a lawyer before he grants one.. **Garth spoke with Bob Spencer**. He hasn't had time to think about it do to sugaring and he would like to go down and would like to look at his property boundary pins and see how they relate to the map and the project. Garth is uncertain which way Bob may decide on granting permission but will visit with him again this week. **Tom spoke with Ambrose Mwea and Stefan Topolski about the access agreements**. Stefan signed his right away. Ambrose and Tom had a nice conversation, and Tom left the papers with Ambrose to look over and sign; **Norm contacted John Lawless** and his wife and is waiting for them to call back.

Action Plan--David asked everyone follow up with their contacts in whatever way they feel will work best, as we need permissions before we can even consider spending \$\$ on the geotech survey.

Tom wondered if we could **modify the agreement we are asking landowners to sign** in order to make it a bit easier to present to them. **Tom thought** a more incremental approach might pay off. **Tom** suggested if we found people uncomfortable with signing the agreement that we ask them how it might be reworded to make it work better for them. **David pointed out 2 of the clauses in the agreement are crucial to our being able to take next steps** - 1: Can we enter your property to do an assessment? and 2: Will you consider granting an easement further on? Thus, we need paragraphs 2, 4, and 5 at a minimum. **Jim** thought the current wording was best, so we know they are fully behind the entire project, and would be unlikely to change their minds when we are further along in the project

Garth spoke with realtor **Carol Bolduc** and she would be willing to talk to landowners about how a trail easement might affect their property values both positive and negative.

A discussion of various issues involving exact property boundaries

Norm pointed out that if Mill Rd is still public property that these folks might be abutters rather than owners, and that as such would not be in the position of needing to give permission. Norm wondered if there were any pins left to find. Jim said he found a pin at what should be the Kilgallen/ Spencer boundary and the Mayhew building having been built across the Mill Rd. is forcing us to go around onto the Kilgallen and Spencer properties.

Deerfield Ave geotech survey and how to proceed

David reminded us the MTWP grant money needs to be spent by June 30, 2020, and that we will have to get Partnership approval to repurpose this grant, and perhaps to get an extension.

Essential question: assuming that the Deerfield Ave property owners give us permission to access their land, **do we want to use the \$20,000 on the Guntlow preliminary geo survey site plan?**

Larry told us Part 1 would be \$7500 - \$9500 for engineering and exploring of alternatives by Guntlows. Part 2A would be \$5500 - \$6500 for geological borings which may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Part 1. Part 2B would be design. This would all get a plan ready to build the first section and Guntlows would oversee a contractor such as Timber and Stone to make sure the first portion was done according to their engineering guidelines. So it could be \$50,000 to get from Deerfield Ave across the rough portion of ground to access the Lillian Davenport property.

Tom pointed out there maybe redundancy between what Guntlows and Timber and Stone are able to do and that Parts 2B, 3, 4, and 5 maybe handled solely by Timber and Stone once the engineering assessment is done by Guntlow at the Deerfield Ave end. **Jim wondered** if Timber and Stone would be able to build the portion across the rough going following Guntlow's engineering guidelines and **suggested we have Melissa follow up with Josh** at Timber and Stone to see how much he could do.

Joel suggested having Dick Hillman look at the Deerfield Ave end and get his thoughts about putting a trail across the rough portion.

Decision/Action Item: Tom moved that Joel, Garth, and Jim, as a subcommittee of the OSC, approach Dick Hillman asap to find out what he feels would be involved to get a trail across the problem area. Motion carried unanimously.

Action Item: Larry suggested that Dick be asked whether the job could be accomplished by June 30 to coincide with our grant deadline. Larry thought we might be able to get an **extension** on the grant. **Larry will call Mr. Bob O'Connor and Peggy Sloan** and see if we can get a spending extension due to the pandemic. **Jim suggested** asking them if they thought next fiscal year's grants might be pulled back due to the deficit the State will be running after dealing with the pandemic.

Other options for our current MTWP grant \$

Larry pointed out that Josh identified concentrations of **invasive species at the Deerfield Ave section of the trail and** that we might be able to have a professional treat them to reduce their number..

Larry said if things didn't come together for the Deerfield Ave project we might consider having **Timber and Stone put a trail from the Wooded Loop Trail to Summit Ave or work on other trails on the Payne property** . He pointed out that if we could get a trail to Summit Ave that would give parking at that end as well as access to a potential trail down Allen Brook. **Garth thought we should get someone from the Payne family to look at proposed trails with us.** He also reported that the current Wooded Loop was in good shape, but a lot of the tree identification signs needed to be reset.

Action Item: Larry will speak with the Paynes about the possibility of putting in more trails.

Larry proposed asking for a **6 month extension** on our MTWP grant. He also said we have at least until the end of the calendar year to use out Cultural Council educational signage grant money.

David enumerated the following **plan of action steps** 1 - Contact Dick Hillman; 2 - Contact Bob O'Connor and Peggy Sloan; 3 – F/U on access permissions from landowners; 4 – Contact Payne family about additions to trails on their property. After these three steps have been accomplished we can better discuss what we will use the grant money for.

Jim and Larry pointed out a number of towns are using grant money for things related to forestry or helping landowners with Chapter 61. Larry agrees that a **6 month extension on our grant** would be the most important thing to accomplish, and without the extension one of the few expenditures would be for trail signs.

David proposed that Jim go ahead with signs we need for trails right now. **Larry said** we might have other monies available that might help with that and suggested not spending any of the WP grant money pending a possible extension. **David would like to get together with Garth** and anyone else and **walk the Wooded Loop Trail and identify possible extensions next Saturday or Sunday.**

2019 Annual Report for Town Meeting: Larry composed the OSC submission for the Annual Town Report. After review, Norm motioned to accept as presented. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Future Grant Opptys

Larry sent out a copy of the grant application for another round of \$20,000 in funding. **Submissions due May 14th.** And monies to be spent by June 2021. He also reminded us the DCR

Recreational Trails grant application will be due next Feb and could be used to help with expensive construction projects.

Other Items

David said Chris Skelly from Buckland had contacted him about an interest in inter-town cooperation on trails and the creation of a **Friends of Buckland and Shelburne Trails**. David will find out what he has in mind , what he hopes to accomplish, and when he would like to begin. Larry said that the of the next extension of the Mohican Mohawk Trail would most likely go from the Potholes up through Buckland to get to Charlemont.

David called for reports from committees.

John Wheeler said the last Planning Board meeting was spent talking about special permits for hiking trails. They haven't had a meeting since. They are looking into a teleconference for their next regular meeting. **Larry is working on some material for the Planning Board** meeting but there has not been time for some public hearings so not much might happen this year.

Norm reported for the Recreation Committee - Cowell Gym is closed until further notice, the Clothing Closet is closed, the Food Pantry is bringing orders out to people in their cars, which he thinks takes place three Wednesdays a month.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Dwight