

Shelburne Falls Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes 6/22/2020

(This meeting was held via teleconferencing).

Members Present: David Schochet, Larry Flaccus, Norm Beebe, Jim Perry, Garth Lapointe, Joel Dwight. **Guests:** Lara Radysh and Bob Higgins, Shelburne Falls residents.

David called the **meeting to order** at 7:03 pm. **The minutes from the OSC meeting on 6/1/2020 were reviewed, amended with a few small corrections, and adopted as amended.**

M & M TRAIL –

Larry reported **the first grant** we received has been extended to Dec 1, 2020 and has been restructured to focus on the Deerfield Ave end of the trail. We have spent about \$1000.00 on signs.

FRCOG requested bids for engineering again and Guntlow is going to rebid and we are waiting for FRCOG to contract with Guntlow.

The **second grant application** has been submitted with a focus on engineering studies dependent upon what Guntlow discovers with their initial work. It also includes fund for permitting, property line survey, invasive species survey, and signage. FRCOG is not fronting the money as they have for the first grant so Larry reduced FRCOG's administrative fee from \$2000 to \$1500. The town will pay and we will reimburse them from the grant money. FRCOG needed to stand down a bit due to uncertainty concerning their own budget. Larry suggested to the Selectboard OSC would pay upfront costs from the land preservation account and put the funds back in once we get reimbursed from the state. The Selectboard asked that we keep town boards such as Planning and Zoning apprised of the situation. Guntlow will handle any wetlands permitting which might be needed. The second grant will begin in July and work covered by it will have to be completed by June 30,2021. The second grant will get us to the point of being able to apply for a recreational trails grant from DCR.

The Selectboard also wanted to know if the Re Committee was interested in doing anything at the **old tennis courts**. Larry told the Board they would be. Norm said they would at least install a picnic table and keep the area around it tidy. Currently we are waiting for FRCOG to contract with Guntlow so they can get started.

Garth, Norm, and Jim met with Steve Mabee, the state geologist, today. They walked across both wet areas of the proposed trail. The geologist felt the bank was quite stable and **suggested a walkway could be done with PT crossmembers on the ground covered with a plank walkway.** This would be much cheaper than screw-in anchors and cantilevering that was proposed earlier and easier and less expensive to maintain over time. We will have to ask Guntlow their opinion of this and how it would fit in with permitting. **Jim emphasized that**

Guntlow needs to examine the possibility of accomplishing the walkway in a **way that keeps the budget down to a reasonable amount.** Norm added that the geologist thought if we do have to go with anchor screws and an elevated walkway that it probably would not be very far down from the surface to bedrock and stability. The less expensive alternative of cross members on the surface and planks is similar to the existing walkway at Gardiner Falls.

Larry told Guntlow about the Winky core drill which Tom had reported about. They were not familiar with it but will look into it. Norm said if we go with the less expensive alternative now we will have the background work done if we decide to go to a more expensive form of boardwalk in the future.

David spoke with Josh from Timber and Stone and they do helical anchoring. Josh prefers low tech anchoring not involving huge equipment. He also said helical piers can be \$400 to \$500 dollars per foot and his company has successfully installed them in the past. Josh thought Guntlow's proposal was reasonably priced and he would be willing to work with us as we go ahead dealing with Guntlow.

Larry reminded us that the first two grants will cover prep work but not cover the actual construction.

Norm told us while they were with the state geologist they **encountered Dan (from the Waste Treatment Plant) and he explained to Steve, the geologist, that there is not brook water coming down off the bank.** Norm also said Steve had studied the maps of the site and Garth said Steve was going back to look at historical maps to try and judge what materials have been used there in the past. **Dan also said there are no active storm drains or sewer lines** that go down in that area.

Josh also spoke to David about the washout below the Sweetheart and explained there is currently too much run off to cross the trail there and we would have to cross higher up the bank. He also said **the invasive plant pressure is high** and would need professional help with controlling them.

Larry said if we receive the second grant there is money available to have professionals deal with the invasives. David confirmed that today's walk with Steve followed the trail marked out by Josh. Jim pointed out there is one spot where softer fill material has been dumped over the bank and suggested we could just go around it.

Jim is working on M&M trail signs and upgrading blazes at Wilcox Hollow and the parking area and working on trail clearing downstream from Wilcox Hollow. Larry thinks FLT and FRCOG are working on updating informational kiosks along Rte 2.

WOODED LOOP TRAILS –

David said **Tom Brule , the Payne’s forester, is preparing a cutting plan for the Payne property for July.** Larry relayed some questions to Helen Payne and Tom Brule but hasn't received a response yet. Margaret Payne told Larry that Helen will not be back here until later in the summer as she lives in Toronto and the border is still closed due to the pandemic. **Larry's two questions for Tom Brule were 1) How much buffer zone can be left alongside the proposed trail? 2) Could a spot be cleared at the top of Little Greenfield Mountain to take advantage of views?**

Garth and Jim are going to flag the proposed trail to mark it clearly for Tom.

Garth has been mowing the current Wooded Loop Trail. It looks nice and he has seen people using it. Jim said signage, blazing, and a new kiosk have been completed at the start of the WL Trail. **Garth report Steve, the geologist, is working on trail signage for a project in Belchertown and he may have useful suggestions to share.**

Larry was told we have about \$105.00 left in an account that the town would like us to use so **Jim will be able to purchase sign making material** with it.

David , Garth, Jim , and Joan are going to get together as the Educational Sign Subcommittee. David will contact Joan.

Larry reminded us **we have \$300.00 available from the Cultural Council** which could be used for signage and brochures for the various trails.

DEERFIELD RIVER ACCESS-

Jim and David attended the **River Access Conference** and learned there maybe **funding for river protection** coming out of the upcoming Environmental Bond bill. David will be receiving information covering the several breakout sessions that were part of the Conference. David learned of the Vermont River Conservancy that manages about 50 river access points across Vermont. The biggest problem they seem to encounter is parking at the various access points.

Garth reminded us that our area of the Deerfield River is a strong draw for river related recreation. **Lara expressed concern about attracting people to Shelburne Falls** and that the number could get out of hand. Garth said the people are already coming to the river and we should do what we can to manage and shape their visitation. David told Lara that she's not alone in her concerns and we need to do what we can to channel and control visitors river experience. Lara invited us to observe what is happening at Sunburn Beach and how that is exploding in popularity. Lara thought more concern should be directed toward making river access more of a local experience in some cases and not inviting everyone in, in a wholesome way. **Garth said he shares that concern** and we have to do what we can to manage it. **Bob**

pointed out the inaccessibility to the Davenport/Town property now is a limiting factor for numbers of people accessing the river **there and that opening up modes of access will create a problem.** David shared that a portion of the River Meeting he and Jim attended was focused on just the concern), not just about attracting more people to the river. **Lara wanted to be clear that she opposes opening up a trail from Deerfield Ave.**

David will be sending out the information needed to be involved in the upcoming Zoom meeting for people interested in joint efforts on trails between folks in Shelburne and Buckland (the newly formed Buckland-Shelburne Trail Alliance).

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Dwight, Secretary Pro Tem