

Approved 10/26/20

Shelburne Open Space Committee Meeting 9/28/20

Members present: Norm Beebe, Joel Dwight, Larry Flaccus, Joan Greenfield, Tom Johnson, Jim Perry, David Schochet

Guest: Kate Garrity, Bob Higgins, Lara Radysh

Jim took chair responsibilities until Larry and David returned from meeting with the Select Board. Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm.

Joel appointed secretary pro tem. Minutes from 8/24 approved and accepted.

Jim reviewed the agenda and asked for any new agenda items that were not included. **Norm introduced meeting on video conferencing** as a new agenda item. Norm proposed meeting on a platform such as Zoom where it is possible to attend via phone or internet access. The general consensus was it would be worth trying.

Jim told us all the graffiti at Wilcox Hollow has been cleaned up except for one rock at the boat ramp.

Larry and David returned from the Select Board meeting at 7:26 pm.

David reported the Select Board is interested in knowing more about the proposed trail from Deerfield Avenue.

Larry told us **we received the second Woodlands Partnership Grant** which will allow us to:

--**continue exploration and design with Guntlow Associates**, (David said he will be calling Guntlow to see how the report is coming along as we have not received their full report yet),

-**identify and confirm property lines along the proposed trail's path;**

--explore options for **clearing invasive species**. (**Lincoln Fish** from Baystate Forestry Service has agreed to join Jim, Garth, Cynthia and David to conduct an in-person review of the invasives situation and provide an initial basic assessment of what would be involved in removing the invasives and replacing with natives species.) David will coordinate day and time of the hike.

--**create more signage** for all trails in town.

Other MM Trail issues:

Larry pointed out a picnic area has not been officially proposed or funded.

David stated we did not want to make the trail an “attractive nuisance”, so we will need to stress that the trail was to be for hiking, and that we may want to use signage to discourage walkers from leaving the designated trail. He further pointed out the town does not have river access as the shoreline appears to be owned by the telephone company.

Joel suggested we speak with Josh from Timber and Stone to see if they have experience with successful strategies to keep people from wandering off a designated trail.

Tom spoke about folks on South Maple Street and Masonic Avenue expressing concern about the trail. **Kate Garrity** shared that a trail along town property has been proposed two times before in different ways. She is concerned that the trail dead ends and people will just be there primarily to access the river. She generally supports trails and enjoys hiking herself but is concerned the area will be altered in a way that will be unable to reverse and a sitting area would attract more folks. **Lara Radysh** then spoke about contacting folks in the neighborhood. She is concerned that the OSC hasn't reached out to all the abutters of the town property. She wants to make sure they know the trail as currently proposed does not go through to the Wilcox Hollow.

Norm said the Recreation Committee is willing to back away from the picnic table idea. Joel and Norm both acknowledged that the concerns about river access were valid and that we need to explore methods of keeping people from accessing the river. **Norm said even if the trail is a dead end in and out it would be of great value to the town.**

Various ways to inform and get input from the community where raised:

Tom thought the issue of placing a trail there might be best brought before town meeting.

Tom also said **we could consider holding off on the dead end trail** until we are more confident on continuing through on Hanfords property to join the M and M trail at Wilcox Hollow.

Kate thought people should be more informed prior to town meeting time. Larry said we want to involve abutters once we had a real idea of where property lines and the trail would actually be located.

David wondered whether a newspaper article and invitation to a community meeting to get input on the trail might be a possibility (once Covid is no longer an issue)

Lara wants to make sure that both positive and negative aspects of a trail be shared with all concerned.

Joan wondered about the cost of a mailing to residents for their feedback about the trail. Larry reminded us the survey we conducted in 2014 showed residents were interested in trail-based recreation accessible from town.

Bob Higgins asked about the kiosk which would be at the trail head and shared his observation of the packed parking lot at Wilcox Hollow and how access brings in people from all over.

Lara raised the issue of **handicap accessibility**. David told us Paul Janake from DCR and the Accessibility Office in the Department of Recreation said there are many specific expectations regarding accessibility that need to be met (state and federal), but there are variances that can be applied for in situations where compliance would be prohibitively costly. **Tom asked if some of the \$20,000 grant could go toward consultation of what would be needed to make the trail wheel chair accessible and compliant with the ADA. David agreed we needed to research this and will reach out to the Mass Office on Disabilities**, and to Thomas McCarthy, an accessibility officer from DCR, concerning the universal access program.

Larry wondered whether Guntlow Associates **may be able to inform us about what handicap accessibility** would cost. Larry said we are making a hiking trail not a highway and agreed with Tom that we will need real numbers if we ask for a variance from ADA compliance. **Joan wondered whether we could research trails** that have had similar challenges and see how they have dealt with them. David will send committee members information he has received from Paul Janake and Tom McCarthy.

Wooded Loop update. Jim reminded us that any extensions of trails at Payne's will be on hold until after the logging project is finished this winter.

Joan wondered if enough information has been shared about the trails we currently have for use. **Tom suggested if we could find an interested Greenfield Recorder reporter** they might speak with someone like Jim Perry about the trails. **Joan will look further into how we might generate publicity for the trails.**

Signage: Larry said he got a letter from the Cultural Council wondering if we wanted to continue with the grant from them or wait until next year. He will see what he has for information on having signs made. **David said Nan Parati from Ashfield** makes signs and she may be able to help with our educational signs. **Jim wondered if we could get some from Voss.** Larry suggested we have design continuity across our signage. Joan said she would contact Nan if we could decide on what we want for signs and what our budget might be. David envisions two style of signs; one smaller with just text and the other larger and more information which could be duplicated and used at multiple trail heads. Larry pointed out all of this needs to be put out to bids due to the funding source. Jim suggested we need to know the threshold of sign expense at which it would need to go out to bid. Norm's wife has suggested 7th grade and up reading level for the signage.

In summary:

David will follow up on handicap accessibility.

Larry will find his information on signs to see what costs and options there are.

Tom will see if Kate has any graphic artist suggestion.

Joan will contact Jim to further pursue getting trail information out to the public.

Lara noted that our meetings may not always be posted on the town's monthly calendar.

David/Larry will check with Terry about how our meetings are posted.

Meeting adjourned 9:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Dwight

Secretary Pro Tem