

Approved 3/22/21

Shelburne OSC Meeting 2/22/21

Larry called the meeting to order at at 7:03 PM

Members Present: David Schochet, Larry Flaccus, Jeanie Greenfield, Jim Perry, Thor Holbek, Norm Beebe, Garth LaPointe, Joel Dwight

Guests: Lara Radysh, Bob Higgins, Richard Stafursky, Gwenerva Nabad, Janet Sinclair

Joel appointed secretary pro tem

Norm pointed at a correction to the minutes from **OSC meeting 1/25/21** on page 2 paragraph three; he clarified that the \$10/linear foot is for a permanent trail easement and not for a 10 or 20 year agreement. **Minutes were reviewed and accepted** with the above noted correction.

New Agenda Items:

Larry told us the Mohawk Woodland Partnership meets tomorrow 2/23/21

Ongoing Business:

David reported that the Selectboard had moved our appearance before them (to request time with the Town Counsel) to their March 1st meeting. Larry suggested we include the amount of time we will need, and the topics we wanted to discuss, with her. Larry and David will be on the Selectboard zoom meeting. The link to the meeting is on the Selectboard agenda, posted on the town website.

David is still working on a sheet of talking points to be used and as an aid in contacting landowners and abutters of the proposed new trail.

David has left 2 voicemails for the state Compliance Officer of the Mass Architectural Access Board, to confirm an earlier discussion of **accessibility requirements** the trail might need to meet.

Norm is waiting to hear back from **Melissa Patterson with the Franklin County Land Trust** regarding the **Hanford property**, specifically: 1- What are the specifics of tax credits which may be available to the Hanfords if there is a devaluation of the property due to a travel easement? 2. Could FLT help us in acquiring easements on the Deerfield Avenue end of the road? Larry thought we would get guidance from our meeting with Town Counsel and then be able to identify the requirements for a survey of property lines involved with the trail project.

Garth reported that Roberge Associates in Greenfield recommended surveyor Dale Merritt from Vernon, VT. Melissa said FLT had used Richard Roberge/Hilltown Land Surveyors from Cummington and also suggested Dan Warner from Colrain.

Educational Signage:

Larry has been in contact with Vacker and Voss regarding types of signs available and mountings and prices.

Joanie suggested we have a logo on all of the signage, so there would be some uniformity that would make it clear that all of the signage was being created and presented by one entity.

Jim said we will need 7 signs and several brochures. He will search in the public domain for things that might be used as a logo.

Thor pointed out the importance of keeping the font style common among all the signs and to make them easy to read.

A **subcommittee to work on the signage** and brochures will consist of Jim as chair along with Joanie, Thor, and Garth.

Larry said we will need 2 of the 18 x 24 size signs for the invasive species and the others could be 12 x 18. He didn't think the signs would need to be put out to bid but we should look further into that.

Jim will make available drafts of proposed signs.

Larry said the Cultural Council and Mohawk Trail grants can be used for the signs if the projects are paid out by 6/30/2021.

Wooded Loop Trails:

Jim put together a very attractive and comprehensive **draft brochure** for the Wooded Loop Trail, which was met with enthusiastic praise from the Committee members. He is working on a brochure for the Ridge Trail and the Tower Trail.

Garth said we should consider walkways at several wet spots on the Wooded Loop Trail. He also spoke with the crew logging at Payne's to make provisions for hikers to more easily stay on the Orange portion of the trail and not get lost by going off the marked trail and further into the property.

David noted that we have only about 50 copies of our old **Shelburne Trails brochure** left, and we need to decide whether to replace it with another all-Shelburne trails map/brochure, or just have maps for each individual trail. Larry thought we should hold off on printing more until we update our maps and Jim introduces the new draft brochures. Jim added that FRCOG is coming out with a recreation map for the hill towns and our trail locations may be included on it. Garth added that many people are learning about our trails on the AllTrails website. Jim opined that our maps are of better quality than AllTrails and we should make them available online.

Jim is working on an **invasive species brochure** with Cynthia Boettner and is looking for input. Garth suggested control measures that could be used on the different invasives. Jim said including a website or key words on the brochure would enable people to access more information on their own. Garth suggested we each come up with a few websites concerning invasives which hikers might find useful and some of these could be listed on the brochure. Thor said Mass Audubon has a great deal of invasive information and he will send the link to Jim.

Announcements:

--Larry - The Selectboard discussed the Community Preservation Act at the last meeting and will be **forming a subcommittee** at a Zoom meeting on 3/24/21 at 6 pm. Joanie will attend the meeting and try to become part of the subcommittee.

--Larry - The Woodland Partnership is having a Zoom meeting 2/27/21. The New England Forestry Foundation is providing a leadership role.

--David reported the Franklin Conservation District has come out with their final report on the Deerfield River and its tributaries. He'll send the link to everyone.

--Jim said FRCOG is putting together a recreation management plan for the Deerfield River and are now searching for funding to support the plan. Norm will talk about this more at our next meeting.

Jim - The Deerfield River Watershed Council is looking into Wild and Scenic status for the Deerfield River and its tributaries. The area included with this designation would be eligible for funding for programs.

Committee Reports:

Norm reported for the Recreation Committee that skating has been a huge success at Stephan Topolski's house.

Larry reported that the Ag Commission has a new member just appointed by the Selectboard but he didn't have her name.

Public Comment:

Richard Stafursky shared his credentials with the group. He has a BS in Zoology from UMass Amherst and a Masters in Biology from George Mason University. He said it is his opinion that the proposed trail is a very bad idea. He pointed out the Supreme Judicial Court previously made a 9 - 0 decision saying any conservation land in any community is serving the community simply by being conservation land. He suggested the area have a designated name and should be protected. He further pointed out that if a trail was put in place and then ordered to be removed and the area restored it could be enormously expensive. He requested time to come back and speak to the group again.

Lara asked if our meetings were recorded and was told they are not.

Susan Stafursky said she agreed with Richard. She and Richard have experience reclaiming an old farm in Conway and returning it to a more natural space. She thinks it would be best not to have a trail but to leave the area as it is.

Guest Gwenerva Nabad introduced herself as a Western Mass resident attending Holyoke Community College studying permaculture and sustainable studies. She has an interest in native species and their preservation. Gwen shared that where she is originally from in central Massachusetts has been largely developed and much was lost due to this development. She feels the proposed trail is a bad idea.

Jim agreed that viewing the area from the outlook at the sidewalk on Bridge St does look very nice. He pointed out the area upon closer inspection is loaded with invasive species. The bank going down from the sidewalk consists of fill material and there are areas on the property which have been heavily

disturbed in the past: it is not a pristine environment. Jim volunteered to go on a hike with any interested parties in the spring and point this out to them.

Bob shared that where he grew up on a river with a waterfall there were many problems with people loitering and trash and he thinks human intervention on the property should be kept to a minimum.

Lara added that the trail would be a ten minute dead end walk. Jim pointed out the overall goal is to make the new trail part of a long distance thru trail—the Mahican-Mohawk Trail—to Wilcox Hollow.

Norm said there is a fair amount of trash down there now and that would be improved by oversight of the trail.

Larry mentioned the Selectboard is working on identifying roads that are discontinued and pointed out there seems to be no record of Mill ST. (which had entered the property from Deerfield Ave.) as ever having been discontinued. Some of the buildings on the Mayhew property were built over it.

David thanked everyone for participating and the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joel V. Dwight - Secretary Pro Tem