

Bedford Trails Committee

Minutes – Tuesday December 9, 2014 – 7:30pm DPW 2nd floor conference room

Participants – Michael, Paul, Dan, Hal, Jim, Mark, Bruce, Adrienne & Kristin

Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2014 approved unanimously

Discuss official status, composition and charge of Trails Committee

Based on tonight's earlier meeting with the Conservation Administrator, Conservation Commission chair, Selectmen liaison to the Volunteer Coordinating Committee, Trails Committee chair and DPW representative, it is now our understanding that the Trails Committee is not considered a sub-committee and will have 7 at-large voting members. Michael will work on writing up a revised charge for the Committee, which will then need review by Trails Committee and Conservation Commission before ultimately being approved by the Selectmen. The charge will formalize the relationship between Trails and other related committees to make sure there is communication exchange as needed.

To increase communication efforts, the plan is to circulate Trails Committee meeting minutes to both the Conservation Commission members and Land Stewards sooner than a month later in case there are comments. There will be no changes to how the Trails Committee budget works; we will continue to make requests to CPC for any project funding needed. Since the Conservation Commission liaison will no longer have to be a voting member, the 7th member of the Trails Committee can be determined at a future meeting.

Bog Bridges, Trail Blazing, Mapping & Maintenance

Town Campus – schedule work approved in RDA; wooden stairs were installed on Sunday, December 7th by Mark, Michael & Jim and a bog bridge was repaired. They accessed the area from the COA and used a cart to bring the materials. The side slopes adjacent to the stairs need some extra material to spread out. Mark is waiting for an intersection post from Ralph and then he will blaze the trails. Mark has a new post-hole digger and is available to install the 3 entrance stanchions. Paul will deliver the stanchions to Mark. DPW will contact DigSafe and schedule the post installation with Mark. Adrienne noted that the work at the end of Elm Street to facilitate the existing trail was completed.

Map boxes – status update; Paul will take care of installing O'Connor map box on the kiosk. For the kiosk on Route 62 at the railroad bed, the Concord Road area/Massport map would be best. Discussed assigning various trail map areas to Trails members so they can do a field inventory of signage, etc. Trail maps divided up and distributed at the end of the meeting. This information will be added to a chart and submitted with the Annual Report. The chart will also help identify missing signage that needs to be added. Discussion continued on the option of having a trail map sign in places where a kiosk or map box are not necessary. Reviewed a pre-fab map sign and determined that Paul will create a demo for review that will be more vandal proof and cheaper to build.

Trail posts/signs – status update; schedule entrance post installation for Job Lane trail; Approved draft guidelines for blazes and posts; Paul will check inventory of entrance stanchions and deliver 5 of them to Mark. Three need to be installed at Town Campus and two need to be installed on either end of the blue trail at Lane School. Eventually an entrance stanchion is needed at Donovan Drive but not until the trail work is complete. Mark will also need an intersection post on Governor Winthrop noting new connection to Donovan Drive. He will coordinate with Ralph. Paul had an idea that the small arrows on the intersection posts, instead of being painted yellow to match the lettering, could instead be painted the color to match the blazing. Mark has written a draft of guidelines for blazes and posts. DPW made a few suggested changes for Mark and Michael's review. The document will be distributed for review.

Huckins Farm – update on town review of easement; review bog bridge map by Clem; There are now 3 locations needing bog bridges that will be included in the next bog bridge permit that will also be noted in the Annual Report for future work. Mark noted that bog bridge ramps should be included to connect the bog bridge sections. Jim suggested that a trails committee member should do a field check near the Harvard pond to take inventory of the existing old style bog bridges that are in place. Paul will take a look in the field and see if the proposed sections of bog bridges could be connected as a continuous length. As a general rule, discussed that use of bog bridge ramps is preferred whenever a bog bridge will create a high step.

Old Middlesex Rd – status update; no update

Peppergrass Brook CA – bog bridge status from field check; Paul will do a field check.

Donovan Drive/Governor Winthrop CA – new trail update; bog bridge needed on existing trail connecting from Governor Winthrop blue trail to Donovan Drive; Mark reported the new trail is complete from Donovan Drive to the intermittent stream, and a bog bridge is still needed as was noted in the Notice of Intent. Mark suggested that a 16-ft bog bridge would be best, at the same location to replace the existing, decaying bridge. Paul noted that we need an inventory of existing bog bridges in stock and we will need to set up another bog bridge building day.

Proposed Bedford Circuit Trail Loop– status update; no update

Trail Guide

Review status of Trail Guide; no update

Updates from other Committees

Land Stewards – Michael received 9 reports from Land Stewards on 13 out of 25 areas. The reports did not address the bog bridge inventory or other conditions so the Trails members divided up the areas to complete a census. There is nothing needing action by the Trails Committee, just a few recurring issues, including the second bridge at Springs Brook CA. Mark noted that Wilderness still needs new bog bridges, in addition to the existing bog bridge that should be shortened and moved approximately 5 feet. Fawn Lake also needs bog bridges.

These locations will need to be added to the next bog bridge permit. As noted above, the committee will work on getting an inventory of bog bridges for the next meeting.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) – Discussed the request for funding of future trail projects. Adrienne noted that an issue has come up with an existing bridge connecting Washington Street to Elm Brook CA that is on private property and is in disrepair. The Town has been asked to remove it but there are neighbors who want it to remain since students are using it to get to school. As such, the Conservation Administrator has noted that the Conservation Commission should review the prioritized list of projects for CPC funding and asked that the Trails Committee attend a Commission hearing in January. It was noted that as a separate committee, the Trails Committee should make their own submission to CPC, which does not need review by Conservation Commission as they can also make a request to CPC. Discussed the benefits of both the Springs Brook boardwalk and the Washington Street bridge project and if the Trails Committee would vote to change the order of the proposed projects to re-prioritize if possible. A motion was made and seconded to switch the order of CPC funded projects to put the Washington Street Bridge/Lantern Lane Bridge as the first project, with the Springs Brook Boardwalk moved to the 2nd year was approved unanimously. Michael will contact CPC to work out additional details related to the follow up questions on the proposed projects.

New Business/Events

Annual Report for 2014 – submit recap of work over the past year and future work proposed for 2015 to Kristin by Monday, December 29th.

Trail Walks & Public Education

Trail leader T-shirt option; not discussed.

December 6th – Bruce recap of walk; family of 5 came on the walk and the weather was not good but went to Old Reservoir starting from cemetery.

January 3rd – needs a leader; Paul will lead. He will pick up binder the week of Dec. 29th.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 7:30pm in the DPW 2nd floor conference room

Meeting minutes recorded by Kristin Dowdy and approved on January 13, 2015.