

TFSC, 10/7/21

Called to order at 6:00

Roll call:

Brad, Russ, Nelson, Mat, Lydia, Colin

Scheduled public participation: none

Approval of minutes:

Russ moved, Lydia second, 6-0-0

Updates from Committee members:

Nelson: Will send list of things done so far this season to include in this set of meeting minutes.

Brad: would be good to get some formal community support for trail maintenance

Russ: Small group hiked to Hawk Watch and took measurements for repair work. NU has a document prepared related to many things to be done in the town forest. Russ has a proposal for what needs to be done and what materials are needed. Proposed budget of \$300-400. There are students experienced with construction. Would be great to have the project done by the end of October.

Brad: Willing to bring horses to transport materials. Happy to help with whatever needs to be done.

Lydia: Collin O'Neill said that materials could be delivered to Shaw, and NU will let us use their ATV.

Explore potential to drop materials at Forest Road.

Plan for October 16-17, 16 demo/cleanup and 17 reroof.

Russ will reach out to donors to order supplies. Metal will need to be pre-cut. It's only 6 panels. Volunteers will need to be equipped with appropriate PPE. Russ will also reach out to Jeff to make sure that the town is on board.

Russ went to the SelectBoard and got approval for writing a letter requesting assistance from the County Forester to rebuild the forest management plan. Brad will arrange a meeting so that the TFSC can meet him.

There was a group hike at the Middlesex Town Forest. Nice to see another example of a community forest and how they're handling all of the questions that we are.

We should look to the select board to help craft a dog policy for the town forest, or talk about how to enforce the current policy in the town forest. Explore how other communities are handling permissions and notifications around dog issues (among others, like parking, etc.). Add dog policy to agenda for next meeting.

We need to do some work at the stream crossing on the Barker Route above the turn up the PMT where the water has been rerouted.

Working Group updates:

Access Study Update:

Things are moving slowly with the access study now that the public engagement process is concluded. D and K will now be narrowing options to bring to the select board to determine which one to refine further.

Maybe a site visit is needed with the SelectBoard to familiarize them with the trail network and access issues. They're not familiar with what we're talking about. This should happen as a high-level overview.

We're going to aim to get on the agenda for a selectboard meeting before the end of the year. Topics to be discussed to be determined.

We need to identify in a more immediate way how to communicate to people where to park, on a published map/site/etc. Right now we're advertising an asset without letting people know where to access it. It would be good to

get written confirmation that we can advertise the spaces at the clinic. The working group will bring back some thoughts about what to include on a map.

Cheney Farm Mowing/Management:

Cheney mowing hasn't happened yet. Raspberries have been marked so that they won't mow them down. It's been a couple weeks since we talked with Jeff, so Nelson will remind him, and bring up avoiding the knotweed. We'll work to determine a firm date that we'd propose for future years. If we want to move back to more grass, we'll need to mow earlier. If we're trying to make habitat then we'll need to be more intentional about how we're managing the parcel. Could be a good educational engagement opportunity. We should consider having the Cheney incorporated into the new forest management plan to protect the edge habitat.

Brad will put Lydia and Russ in touch with a biologist from Audubon to talk about what would need to be done to encourage more robust habitat.

Trail Maintenance/Seasonal Considerations:

Would be good to organize a formal process for identifying and prioritizing trail maintenance. Also good for keeping an eye on new developments in the forest. Think about trail chiefs or other variety of community volunteer involvement.

Considerations for seasonal closures need to be thought about. In preparation for the spring we should think about whether we need to close trails during mud season or during specific sub-seasons for deer wintering, etc. Look to Millstone and Catamount for examples. Consider flagging and signage for marking.

Ridgeline Trail Reroute:

We need a meeting with Norwich to coordinate whether there's interest and assets available to reroute the trail.

NCC/TFSC Bylaws:

Issues to be addressed include:

Adjusting number of seats

Colin moves "to adjust the number of seats on the subcommittee to not more than 7, with a majority of members not on the conservation commission", seconded by Lydia. 6-0-0.

Consider formalizing LDA border designations (if we voted that way).

Motion to adjourn at 7:24 by Russ, Mat seconds 6-0-0