

Town Forest Stewardship Committee meeting minutes December 5, 2023

Meeting called to order at 6: by Jeremy

I. ROLL CALL

Jeremy, Russ, Andrew, Colin in attendance.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 17, 2023

Motion to approved by Russ, second by Colin, 4-0-0

IV. DISCUSSION & UPDATES

A. Shaw Outdoor Center Update

- a. Parking lot is still on hold pending permitting concerns, likely to be moving forward in the spring.
- b. Andrew is working with Tom Davis and community members on another round of VOREC funding separate from any town applications. He is also working on a RTP grant too.
- c. Conceptual plans have been approved for repairs from the landslide, and a conceptual plan is underway for repairs to the Slate Ave trail. There is a potential holdup in FEMA funding as it has been learned that the landowner needs to pay costs upfront to be reimbursed by FEMA.
- d. Significant trailblazing has happened on the South and East sides of Paine, along with tree clearing to hopefully be completed with assistance from NU volunteers and other organizations.
- e. Equipment issues exist that could potentially prevent grooming for the beginning of the winter. Hopefully another piece of equipment will be able to be retrofitted to allow for grooming to commence soon.
- f. Once grooming is possible, the group will explore grooming a loop around Cheney connecting to both the gate at the bottom and through to the Quarry.

B. Accessible Trail to the Anchor

- a. Andrew is exploring creating a more accessible trail to the anchor, which would likely need to cross the top of the Cheney in order to create appropriate grades, and then into the woods east of Cheney uphill switchbacking across existing approved trails leading back onto NU property and the Red Trail. Andrew will prepare the New Trail Request form and provide a map detailing the intended patch of the trail.
- b. In order to proceed, Andrew needs permission from the town. Motion by Colin to recommend approval of the request, second by Jeremy, 4-0-0

(Nelson joined the meeting at 6:25 pm)

C. Wayfinding Signage

- a. Map preparation is largely completed except for design details that will be handled by local volunteers.
- b. Signage is at about 80% complete with some tasks remaining including opinions of probable cost and some location/phasing.
- c. Cost estimates are ranging from \$60-90k to complete the full list of identified signs. The committee is exploring lower cost options, as well as what should be prioritized for the initial phase of implementation.

D. Ski Trail Proposal update

- a. Joe Z and Ray and a team of volunteers completed initial work on the new ski trail over two weekend. The male fern population was identified, marked, and avoided entirely. Initial reports are that it is a very nice trail to ski.

E. VOREC Grant update

- a. Significant progress has been made on all aspects of the grant components with the exception of the economic impact study.
- b. A subsequent grant application is underway specifically to address shortfalls in budget for wayfinding signage implementation.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. There is an upcoming hearing to review the Zoning Regulations. The NCC has an interest in the creation of a Town Forest zoning district, or exploring other standard zoning districts to better protect the land, currently proposed as Low Density Residential. The TFSC and NCC previously submitted a letter to the Planning Commission requesting the creation of the Town Forest district, in which any development would be conditional on approval by the Select Board in consultation with the NCC, and in strict accordance with the goals and objectives of the Town Forest Stewardship Plan.
- B. Volunteers from the school and town are working to get a program in place to perform cleanup of existing trail damage and potentially routine maintenance. Significant effort would be required to clean up all of the downed trees.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Russ, second by Colin, 5-0-0