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By KWilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 8:40 am, Feb 13, 2024

## TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Trails Sub-Committee

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**Monday** November 20, 2023

Northborough Trails Committee

*Northborough Police Station Meeting Room*

***Attendees: Bob Mihalek, Brian Belfer, Bern Krafzig, Bill Cobb, Craig Cox, Yuhi Kashii, Masa Kashii, Victor Jacek, Dennis Lindenberg, Marielle Stone, Janet Cason, Ginny Lemmerman, Vinny Vignaly***

7:02 p.m. - Meeting opened by Bob Mihalek

- 1) Bill made a motion to approve the October minutes, Craig seconded. A unanimous vote approved the minutes.
- 2) Vinny Vignaly (Conservation Agent) gave an update on the Forest Management Plan.
  - a. There had been delays in the completion and signing of the contract with Wigmore due to an illness.
  - b. Also due to an illness, the representative from Wigmore could not make this meeting. It may be possible to make the January 2024 NTC meeting if the contract is finalized.
  - c. There was also discussion that the ConCom raised the idea that there may be an opportunity at Mt Pisgah, due to the 120-acre fire. Some forestry activities coordinate well with regrowth after a fire. But Vinny didn't know the details.
  - d. Once the contract is signed, the town can then decide what parts of the plan it wants to implement.
  - e. As it is today, 43K is allocated to the Edmund Hill plan. It could grow if Mount Pisgah is added. There is a desire to keep it under 50K to eliminate the need to go re-bid.
- 3) Craig asked Vinny about any updates on the Forest Management Plan from the last ConCom meeting. Vinny indicated that there was some community feedback received, but the only changes would be after we hire the forester and she updates it to incorporate climate change planning.
- 4) Craig asked about Federal grants to help cover the cost of the Forest Management plan and implementation. Vinny said to date he was only pursuing DCR grants. Vinny agreed to inquire about Federal Grants once we have a plan to implement.
- 5) Ginny said she attended the ConCom meeting and that the Forest Plan discussions were positive and ConCom was appreciative to hear from the public on the plans. ConCom also said there was flexibility in how the plan funds are spent.
- 6) Ginny asked generally how the committee handles invasives maintenance. As part of that discussion, she asked Vinny if there was anything in the Forest Plans to handle invasives. Vinny indicated that there was, but it is focused on Edmund Hill and Mount Pisgah. Bob outlined that we have discussed many times in the past strategies, but only have implemented small, localized removal by brush cutter or by hand means.
- 7) Craig brought up that he was contacted by a group in town that was interested in doing a night hike they are calling a "Night Owl" hike. They were looking to see if anyone in NTC was interested in leading it. Brian said he may be interested.
- 8) Bob discussed that we usually turn our December meeting into an unofficial holiday gathering. He will reach out to the Historical Society to see if it's available.
- 9) Bill gave a maintenance update:

- a. Bob and Bill replaced the rotted roof and updated the map on the kiosk at the Cold Harbor trailhead at West Main Street. Vinny made note that if we had a set of kiosk plans, to please send a copy to him for the file. Bill to check on that.
  - b. Bill did a survey of the Cold Harbor trail north of West Street. Several bridges need new treads and some need to be staked down. There was a discussion about the floating bridge needing some alignment and the fact half of it is sitting on dry ground. Bill asked Vinny to check to see if anyone in any department knows if something was done to permanently lower the water levels on that brook. This will help determine if something should be done with the section on dry ground.
  - c. Brian and Bill raked out the Sliding Boulders trail and flagged the route in preparation for eventual blazing. Brian also raked out the Round Rock trail. There was discussion that these trails could use leaf blowing if someone had time.
- 10) Bill gave an update on the trail map update project. Bill submitted a first pass set of updates to the town GIS administrator and also met with them to review. We are awaiting feedback on what has been submitted so far including a sample GPS track. Vinny brought up the fact that some trails that are not maintained by NTC may not be in the latest data. There was a general discussion about this. Brian is also still working on contacting Mass Wildlife to discuss trail maps and maintenance issues.
  - 11) Bern brought up a down tree on the Westborough side of one of the Mass Wildlife trails. These are out of scope for NTC and must be reported to Mass Wildlife.
  - 12) The topic of the Birdsong Trail bridging work came up. Brian said he was still working on the materials list, but indicated that its about 75 feet of bog bridging and associated lumber would be approximately \$840. Bob suggested we vote to approve the expenditure now rather than later. The following vote was taken:
    - a. Bob made a motion to spend funds in the amount of \$840 to cover the purchase of lumber for the Birdsong bog bridge project. Funds to be taken from the NTC budget. Ginny seconded. A unanimous vote approved the motion.
  - 13) Bob discussed some maintenance he was doing on the Assabet Park trail. Blowing out the trail and fixing 2 of the storybook kiosks. Marielle asked Vinny if there were any plans to remove some of the dead trees causing a safety hazard in the Assabet Park forest. Janet expressed concern about cutting a lot of trees at Assabet. We landed at a place where we would look into only the dead trees that are a direct hazard to the trail and parking lot. Bill asked Vinny to look into the one large dead tree at the trailhead.
  - 14) Vinny gave an update on the ADA trail. The plans are in place for Spring/Summer 2024 construction. Bob asked about winter maintenance and Vinny indicated that it would be a seasonal trail. NTC would provide its standard maintenance.
  - 15) Brian brought up to Vinny that the Round Rock Extension trail would need to be walked and submitted to ConCom for approval.
  - 16) Brian reminded members to carry and hand out NTC business cards in their travels
  - 17) Vinny gave an update on the future Hop Brook trail system. DCR is moving forward with their work necessary to remove the hazardous materials and reinforce the dike. As a result of this work, DCR will carve out access areas on RT20 and Davis Street that could be used for future trailheads for NTC. A 2025 estimated completion on this.
  - 18) Bill brought up that we still need to walk Mount Pisgah to document remaining signs that are needed.

Brian made a motion to adjourn at 8:38p, Bob seconded. A unanimous vote approved.

Adjourn at 8:38 pm.