

Open Space Committee minutes for January 11, 2022

Present: Rick Gardner, Susan Downing, Deb Cary, Karen Rossow and guest Laura Reynolds who has been approved by the selectboard today but has to be sworn in.

Meeting began at 7:04 p.m. This meeting was held via Zoom due to the continued increase in Omnicron variant of Covid virus positive cases. Also, it's 5 degrees outside.

- 1.) Following an edit, the minutes from the December meeting were unanimously approved. We also unanimously approved our 2021 Annual Report for the Town.
- 2.) Trail Summit: Due to new restrictions imposed by the large increase in Covid-19 cases, we decided to postpone the summit until we can meet in person, aiming for late March or early April 2022. We are still dedicating the majority of this meeting to our plans for the summit. We may be able to get an article in the Redemption Rock News beforehand with this delay. It may be a better opportunity to include a walk on trails, possibly either Goodnow Park or Thomas Prince Trails. NEW DATE NOT DETERMINED YET.

Rick will provide introductions.

Deb's presentation on the history of the Open Space Committee, our partners in conservation and the generosity of land donors was inspired and we might move that to the beginning of the program. She covers the past twenty or so years and how the parcels link together for us to create a terrific trail system and substantial wildlife corridors. Princeton has deliberately, actively protected our rural, natural landscape for the betterment of the community and visitors.

Susan will review the website development, how to navigate it and what's new with it.

Rick will talk about our Trail Vision and Action Plan, including our survey results, trail development strategy for sections around town and the backbone of the plan. He'll discuss obtaining permission from landowners to publicize trails (or not) and strategies that meet everyone's concerns and goals. Lauren recommended highlighting what we've done in 2021, which has been quite a bit! Rick will introduce GPS maps and Mass Mapper, a great mapping website from the state that includes many layers, much information.

Susan and Karen will introduce the *Princeton Hikes!* program, including some slides of hikers having a great time. We will wrap up the program encouraging attendees to provide their insights and participate in our work.

- 3.) Signage updates: A few additional small brown signs have gone up and we are getting positive feedback on them. Rick states that some permanent intersection signs are needed at a few junctions and will see about getting them in place. An idea about including QR codes that permit hikers to provide us with interesting information about locations is being considered. The information would be vetted by OSC before going on our website. VOTED to approve \$100 for the printing of Mini-Maps from Makepeace
- 4.) Website re-design: Moving along. The team is creating a succinct, user-friendly format to make people feel "like they are in good hands"; they should feel comfortable getting out on our trails. Laura suggested a means by which people will know *exactly* where they can/should park. We can do that!
- 5.) 2022 trail projects: Rick reports that water certification is COMPLETE for Red Fox Farm (RFF) trails. Unfortunately we couldn't toast to it as we were remote. This spring we'll organize a work party to clear the trails there and at Russell Corner. Rick interested in a bridge over Sam Cobb brook. Deb and Rick will approach some of the neighbors to gauge their interest/hear any concerns. Rick will contact Scott Morris regarding plans for Goodnow Park. We would like to clean up the trails there if P&R has no objection.
- 6.) Princeton Hikes! update: Rick is concerned that the groups are too large and is looking for a solution that would not put off the regular participants from surrounding towns but keep more from joining. Ideally our hikes include everyone from Princeton who would like to join us. He, Susan and Karen can work on a survey to send out in an effort to gain ideas for improvement and prune the mailing list. This should help inform us on how to proceed.

7.) Mass Open Space Conference 2022 is upcoming. Karen will forward invitation to everyone. This year it is remote and no charge, including four consecutive sessions, so we don't have to choose one over another.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 8th at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Google Meet.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Rossow