

Open Space Committee Minutes

June 6, 2017

Present: Rick Gardner, Deb Cary, Karen Rossow

Excused: Phil Gransewicz, Kim Houde. Kelton Burbank

Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

1. Minutes from April were approved.
2. Bickford Pond: Rick attended a meeting with Janet Morrison and John Deline (Fitchburg Water Supply). John approved request to change the signs. Also said that access around the pond is allowed for occasional hiking but we cannot mark trails or promote hiking. Princeton Hikes! walk will be OK, we just need to notify John.
 1. We will also be doing some trail maintenance on the AT+T line to the south of Bickford Pond with Jassy Bratko (North County Land Trust and Hubbardston OSC) on Friday June 16, 9-12. Rick will be inviting OSC contacts (TAP List and others).
 2. Rick will order the signs and Tom has volunteered to help put them up.
 3. Tom mentioned that the Krashes land south to Thompson pond is not likely to be sold to DCR right away.
 4. The signage change is being done at the request of Dave Krashes, who is negotiating with Fitchburg for a CR on his property east of Rhodes Rd. We are not sure what the status of this CR is (Rick will ask Janet).
3. Trails mapping project update: Rick has a bit of cleanup to do on the website before we publish. Once that is done, will send around a draft press release letting the townspeople know of the site.
 1. OSC Members are asked to review the website info and pass comments to Rick.
 2. Need to update two trails as Fieldstone Farm and PLT Alexander property trails have not yet been completed.
 3. 'Princeton Hikes!' program is ongoing. Last two hikes had low attendance, first one due to rain. We have two planned for June. New poster is out.
4. Trail Around Princeton (TAP) update: Not much activity this month. We discussed this at some length, and believe that we should change our approach and begin opening some sections as we are ready to do so:
 1. Take segments, like Krashes to Bullock Lane, and mark them with TAP trail markers. Do whatever segments we can move on.
 2. Clearly define what is expected of landowners, and what is promised by OSC in terms of trail management. Rick will take stab at this.
 3. Invite selected segment landowners to a meeting to present this information and talk through concerns. Maybe start with the section in back of Paradise Pond (Hillis, Stewart).
 4. Consider limiting access to registered 'users' instead of leaving it open for all use.
 5. Consider using town roads for links as a starting point where we have landowner constraints.

In this way we begin to show progress and to nail down trail segments. For example we could begin to mark Midstate Trail segments such as Audubon with TAP markers.

We agreed to discuss this in more depth at the next meeting.

Action items still pending:

1. Complete arrangements with Wachusett Mtn (DCR): Kelton is working on this and we see this as a linchpin of the project. Once we get this agreement the other pieces should begin to fall in line. Tom volunteered to help with the WMSR issues.
 2. Landowner agreements with Jim Hillis and WMSR (Kelton).
 3. Landowner discussion with Moshers (Justin Griffin).
 4. Landowner link from PLT Peabody/Metcalf land to Johnny G Trail and Whitaker Lane.
 5. TPS to RedFox: Idea of using the Poutwater Trail. Will need DCR approval if we are to do this.
 6. For Brooks Station Road to Calamint Hill Road: Justin Griffin is approaching that landowner.
 7. May be possible to connect from Four Corners to Mount Wachusett via Bickford Pond and Dave Krashes land. There are landowner issues and not certain how best to navigate through. Rick will do some more exploring.
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5. Fieldstone Farm Update: Still waiting for final resolution of wetland plans. Brian reports that progress has been made but we are not quite ready to build trails yet.
 1. Funding grant is not resolved yet. Will be a couple more months.
 6. Thoreau Trail Project: No action on this. Not sure what is happening.
 7. Open Space Planning Consultant: Karen reviewed a letter received from GPA, which offered a possible grant for assistance with Open Space planning. After discussion we agreed that we probably can do the Open Space Plan ourselves.
 8. Next meeting: July 19th if we can get a conference room.
 1. We need to consider a different day for our meetings, as Tuesdays are not ideal. Wednesday will work for us, but the small room is not available on the first and third Wednesday. Will discuss more at the next meeting.
 9. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Gardner