

NOTES from the Land Stewardship Subcommittee Discussion on February 10, 2022

The meeting was held in the Town Council Chambers with only five members in attendance in the Town Hall. Additional members were on Zoom.

Attendance: Gale Carey, Sally Needell, John Carroll, Ann Welsh and Larry Brickner-Wood were present and Mike Everngam and Mike Drooker were on Zoom. Also in attendance were Tom Brightman and Todd Selig. Absent: John Nachilly, Vin Dellova, and Sally Tobias

The meeting was called to Order at 8:33 AM by Ann Welsh. Because the subcommittee did not have a quorum present in the Town Hall Council Chambers, the meeting was held to share information, and no decisions were made.

Proposed Research Project for the Spruce Hole Bog Presentation-Alix Contosta

Alix Contosta explained the purpose of the research work to monitor the seasonal changes at the Spruce Hole Bog as part of course work for Ecology and Society in a Changing Arctic, part of a new graduate program at UNH. Typically sensors are placed on a 4x4 post, along with a solar panel and a trail camera on the site. There is a tentative starting date for installation of the sensors on February 21 and an initial round of data collection from 3/21 to 4/18 is anticipated.

Comments from the LSC included concerns about students generating a “herd” trail in this environmentally sensitive area and possible options for accessing the bog; educational signage at the kiosk to describe the project; a request from the National Natural Landmarks Program for examples of how the Spruce Hole Bog contributes to our community; the best physical layout for the sensors; the value of sharing results with the community; flexible timing for installation; no pressure-treated wood. The members attending the meeting were very supportive.

Stewarding Our Lands-Ann Welsh and Gale Carey

32 in-person and 77 online surveys have been completed to date. Conducting the surveys has identified questions to be tweaked and added. In-person contacts have been valuable, however the current approach is not sustainable.

The working group is considering future sites for conducting surveys. They include Wagon Hill Farm (WHF), Oyster River Forest, and Long Marsh. WHF will be next.

QR codes for completing the surveys could be placed at the entrances to each property. Our Town GIS operator might be able to assist.

Property Updates-Tom Brightman

The new signs and decals for WHF have arrived and will be installed when the ground is not frozen and the weather is warm enough for the decals to adhere to existing signs.

The Tallamy presentation on Native Plants will be on February 28th. Members should sign up when the registration opens on the 16th. Spread the word about this important presentation.

Before signs are ordered for Doe Farm, more information needs to be collected-GIS, new trail. Signs should be ready this summer. It was suggested that a trail sign is needed on the new connector trail to keep users on the trail. John Nachilly and Tom Brightman will check.

The Eagle Scout bridge project in the Stolworthy area is on ORCSD property. Whether or not the school district has land surveys was questioned.

Plowing of Parking Lots at Town Conservation Lands-Ann Welsh

This topic was only introduced and raised a concern about when plowing takes place at Town lands and access for users.

Reports from Committees

AG:Development of a Foodshed by Durham, Madbury, and Lee farmers

Trust:Applications for a new Financial Advisor for the Trust Fund

HDC:Preparation for an LCHIP grant for the Chesley-Bickford House

Discussion on how to have a more inclusive history of the town

TC: Pike Property presentation and approval of ConCom funds; Lafayette sign

P&R: Woodridge to UNH trail discussion-including parking concerns and impacts of added use;
manner of access - a designated pathway to avoid playing fields; costs and maintenance

Other Updates

There is a Trail Tromp on Saturday 2/12 from 11:00-3:00 encouraging the use of trails and local Businesses.

Adjournment: 9:52. The next meeting is on March 10, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Needell