

Wednesday February 10, 2021

Meeting began at 6:33 pm

Facilitating: Laura Ginsburg

Planning Commission Members Present: Janet Wells, Brenda Fields, Dan Ruddell, Shane Young, Israel Provocha

Public Present: Michael Sacca, Matt Slayton, Elizabeth Brown, Maureen McCullough, Betsy Geiser, Todd Tyson, Ben Wolfe, Matt Frost, Rett Emerson, Cal Heminway, Anne Linehan, John Echeverria, Kevin Rose, Scott Devers, Zac Freeman (RASTA), Denny*, Paul H*¹

Introduction of the Planning Commission, what we do, and the purpose of the meeting (see below)

Overview of Agenda:

- Gather feedback about usage of legal roads in town
- Where are they?
- Discussion with Zac from RASTA
- Four Meetings every other Wednesday from 6:30-8 pm

Purpose of Meeting:

- Learn about the topic
- Gather information about people's concerns
- Develop a survey to send out to the town in regards to legal trails
- Develop a recommendation to present to the Seletboard

Meeting:

- The four legal trails were identified on a VTTrans official map
- Discussion about the specific usage of legal trails found in the town plan (currently only open to pedestrian use but on page 54 of the town plan a suggestion appears recommending wider use)
- Noted that three out of four were currently used by bikers
- Discussion about whether there should be an ordinance or a policy in place and who enforces it

Zac from RASTA

- Trail maintenance for RASTA:
 - Let town know what and when they are doing maintenance - no issues

¹ *Unidentified, via Zoom name

- Received verbal permission from Selectboard for maintenance
- Questions about who deems trails safe - unsure of that
- Discussion on other trails in the Randolph area being used by VAST and horses (no issues between groups)
- Question about when trails are open or closed
 - Town and local groups take care of maintenance and trail quality monitoring
- Discussion about towns that do not have money or a local organization (like RASTA)
 - Usually community helps contribute - like-minded citizens
- Discussion of trails that are close to house - there are landowner concerns over trails being too close to properties
 - Nothing like that in Braintree so no answer
- Discussion about how Randolph and Braintree view trail use
 - Seen as a resource and an asset, especially given COVID (bump in outdoor rec since pandemic)
- Discussion about the STRAVA app (used to GPS your outdoor activity) and its impact - does it cause a proliferation of people?
 - Helps get people into outdoor recreation but has not created large groups of people because of its difficult to know exactly where they are
- Discussion about large bike events (like the Ranger) and their impact on trail quality
 - Can have an impact on the terrain
 - Responsibility of organizers to be aware of impact
 - Organizers should partner with community/neighbors to make sure everyone is on the same page and trails are being observed
- Point was made that in order for trails to be successful there should be a mutual respect between landowners and users. Want to encourage land use and access for all but ensure mutual respect between parties
- Discussion and concern over the affects of bikes
 - Who is going to clean up?
 - Concerns about the amount of people on the land and the variety of times they come.

Next Steps:

- Suggested landowners-only meeting
- Hear from other experts from other towns to provide input
- Contact other towns about their policies
- Next meeting Wednesday February 24 at 6:30 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 8:06 pm