

August 10, 2023

Trails committee meeting at Tunbridge Public Library- unapproved minutes

Sue Salster, Kevin Rose, Jonathan Bicknell, dan 'rudi' Ruddell, Elisse Gabriel, Thornton Hayslett via Zoom

Public: John Echeverria, Betty Brown, Ellen Hosford

Public comment: John E notes ongoing legal dispute, aspirations to find common ground, says offer to invite evictees stands if dispute is worked out to their (Echeverria-Pratt) satisfaction

Also notes Mike Hebb signage; Jonathan has sought a quote from Mike Hebb; John E believes signs will be 'in their face', wishes for something simple, unobtrusive

Events: John feels draft Class 4 policy and trails MOA are inconclusive regarding events (lacks definition of events)

MOA notes limited parking available on either end of trail, John doesn't understand why this is specified if these are connector trails and not loop trails, unsure of necessity or intent of these specs

Brenda: Jackson Bradford interested in being on Trails Committee (or maybe just a steward?)

Trail updates: Orchard, Baptist, Crossroad all very wet; Falls Hill nearly impassable even on foot

Noted that Zoom meetings in Town Office are virtually inaudible due to noise of air conditioners

Jonathan notes MOA provided to selectboard, designation of stewards; parking areas were not a big topic of discussion for the committee, not clear the reference to them needs to be included

VAST has lent 'Closed' signs for trails (three total)

Signage: Kevin inquires about vandalism, Jonathan notes this topic informs decisions on types and quantities of signs

Sue thinks only way to prevent vandalism to signs on Falls Hill is gate or fence on Royalton end (on private land)

Kevin notes Emerson gates (Strafford/Tunbridge) have stopped ATVs but not bikes, discussion of perception that this is public land and a 'tent platform' was put in place (not true)

Sue notes cement footings have helped deter vandalism in some places

Kevin and Jonathan note that VAST signs have never been vandalism targets, may be due to hot button topic aspect of trails discussion

Jonathan: do we need a budget? Kevin: donations if they are cheap enough? But a budget for signage would be helpful

VAST pays \$30 for a metal sign; Jonathan notes \$20/sign for Mike Hebb signs

John E offers that negative message of trail signs provokes vandalism, Kevin tends to agree; John again suggests messages need to be positive

Brenda suggests signs should be manufactured, funded by volunteers - not a town expense

Thornton suggests 'homemade' feel may help

Jonathan questions whether use should be specified, Kevin notes actual barriers in his area – others note this is cost prohibitive and/or ineffective for the trails

Kevin and Thornton suggest asking for a sign budget indicates nature of a town effort, some buy-in

Jonathan suggests 8 signs to start, estimates \$500 and notes repeat requests would indicate vandalism issues

Elisse suggests in-trail signage at key points would be valuable; Brenda suggests blazes would be cheap

Thornton moves a request for \$500 sign budget, Kevin seconds; approved on voice vote

Planning discussion:

Sue suggests proper signage is primary concern on Falls Hill; Sue notes there is a portion in between abutter and Cal's land that is not designated Legal Trail (added note not spoken during meeting: a bit shy of 700 ft) ; Sue notes belief this is Cal's choice as to how he wants to manage this section

Signage needed on Falls Hill trail to indicate dead end nature of trail due to Cal's ownership of section in between

Orchard Rd planning? Primarily signage at this point. Thornton suggests a QR code on metal plate for additional info, but several note this requires cell or internet access that is not currently available

Jonathan notes planning should include working out "events" definition, noting ATC and GMC limits number in party and other specs

Jonathan notes new position as varsity soccer coach will limit availability for September and October, others indicate OK with taking off these months for meetings

Thornton expresses concern with Orchard remaining closed until November if the trail dries up; is there stewardship flex here? Jonathan notes selectboard decision was to open further recreational use contingent on planning, particularly around wetland impacts

Meeting adjourned 7:08 pm