

## **Nottingham Trails Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 3, 2020**

**Location: Town Office, Conference Room 1; and Zoom**

- Present: SD, LG, SM (in person); CA, DK, MB, IB, BG (via Zoom). The NTC meeting began at approximately 6:50pm, at the conclusion of the NCC meeting to vote on a request for an expenditure from the Conservation Fund.
- Welcome and Announcements - No Announcements
- Review and Approve Minutes of 8/6/2020—some corrections were made by email. LG moved to approve minutes as amended. CA seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8 Yea).
- Action Item and Project Updates
  - Marsh Woods:
    - CA and BG went out twice and made some progress on trail blazing. CA went out on her own and finished all of Merriam-Daggett and into Tasker as far as the landfill, except for the section to be re-routed near the new bridge. The remainder of Tasker may not need to be blazed along the old access road, and the sand pit area will be stakes and ropes. Let CA know if anyone goes out there and notices areas that need a little extra work.
    - SM spoke with Jon Rydberg, NCC, about helping with the bridge. CA had email exchange with JR and he has too many other commitments right now. SM: Rec. Department might be able to recommend someone who could volunteer to build the bridge at crossing 2. Will also ask Gary Anderson (who is a carpenter). Would be better if someone could donate their time and just be reimbursed for materials so we don't have to go through the official process of going out to bid before hiring someone. We should check with local organizations. CA: Whoever is going to do it should look at the site first. According to our permit, it must be a "bank to bank" bridge so it doesn't impact stream channel or sides of stream. DK: what about using the design from the North River bridges? CA: We have those specs and can use them, but it does not need to be an identical design. The permit also allows us to use stepping stones instead of a bridge. Using online search, CA did not find pressure treated lumber in the dimensions we need to be available locally. PT lumber is also heavier and prone to warping. DK: maybe ask one of the mills and consider alternatives to pressure treated wood and treat it ourselves. She can check with Seacoast Mills.
    - MB and IB placed some stepping stones at crossings 3 and 4 and will recheck when wetter weather returns to make sure they're in good spots.

- DPW tasks - Parking area: Shawn McLean, Public Works Director, put down a strip of gravel opposite the trailhead entrance, enough space for three cars, seems to be working well. No progress yet on asphalt removal from sandpit or gate for June access restriction (can't be done until Nov). SD/SM will follow up with Shawn. Access to the sand pit would need to be from the recycle center (as we expected). CA: Gate might need to be ordered ahead of time.
- KD says Trex bench is in the kitchen and we can take it any time we want. Do we want to put it out at the mill site at Marsh Woods? How will we get it out there? Bench is not heavy and must be secured, maybe with cement blocks. DK has a cart that might work to move it or suggests that we could sled it in. SM went and looked for the bench and it's not there. So when we find it again and place it, we should secure it in place somehow.
- CA: Tree work remaining to be done on Tasker to clear the view: would probably require a chainsaw and can't be done until November. Other chainsaw tasks: two dead hemlocks ~4" diameter near crossing 5; CA taped with orange tape. MB and IB can work on this. CA will make them a map.
- Directional signs for trail junctions and other places in Merriam-Daggett and Tasker would also be helpful. Could use one coming into East pasture (right takes you to Tasker, left takes you toward mill). Need to decide on place names. SD suggests River Trail and Pond Trail. CA: The river is on whole property so might not be distinct enough; the mill and ponds are distinguishing features we can use. Signs could be temporary (just writing on corrugated plastic) for now and then replaced with something more permanent when we're more certain about best locations, place names, etc.
- Can walk across the riverbed and get to the East side of the river right now because the river is so dry. CA went over there and checked out some of the boundary markers that are unclear from the map. If anyone else wants to check out the areas on the East side of the river CA will lead a walk over there. Will aim for an afternoon next week if the weather's good. Wednesday, 9/9 at 4:30. Meet at trailhead. CA will send out a reminder.
- Town Office Trail:
  - SD got a call from David Noyes in response to letter DK wrote and several edited. Mr. Noyes doesn't want to put anything in writing about people

using that section of the old road that's on his property. He has a couple of people interested in buying it. Doesn't object to people using it, but doesn't want to officially say yes or no. Would be OK with us cutting the trees that have fallen across the trail. He owns property on both sides of Old Gile Road. On the SW side it abuts the town property that the exercise trail is on. On the NW side abuts Camelot Court common area. Could talk with the Camelot Court people and just let the trail extend as far as their land. DK: Could see if the Town could buy the two small riverside lots on the Noyes property that connect with the town's parcel. They're small and undevelopable because of wetlands. CA: But might be desirable for their river access to a buyer of the larger lots on the N side of Old Gile. Based on his responses, we will not pursue the conservation easement option or the landowner permission form with him.

- Can hold off for now on creating landowner permissions form since the Noyes property is not useable for an official trail and that's the primary one that would be needed. No point in asking the other landowners if he said no.
- DK: KD told her there was a lot of poison ivy near the exercise trail at the Town Office. Could trim poison ivy and put down some kind of paper/fabric or maybe leaf bags and weight it with bricks or soil to smother it near the trail. CA: they tried something like this with old carpeting at the library and the PI spread under the carpet and came up again beyond the edges. Would need a professional to apply herbicide, and only certain products are allowed near wetlands. Library also interviewed someone who hand-pulled it, but expensive and must be repeated. DK: maybe we could hand pull ourselves; she has done some of this – suit up and wash thoroughly afterward. Or goats/sheep? – some were skeptical this would be effective.
- Kennard Forest Stewardship Plan: CA walked the property on 8/19/20 with Ellen Snyder of Ibis Wildlife Consulting, whom we have hired to create a Stewardship Plan for the property. CA did a write-up of their walk and put in a "Stewardship" file on the Drive under Kennard Forest. Ellen suggested not using the very eroded section of the main N-S trail south of the middle stone wall; instead we would block it off and just use the loop created by the east and west trails. Might be able to make a continuation of the spur that goes out to the vernal pool and bring that around toward the trailhead to create a smaller loop. Found a lot of hemlock looper moths and the hemlocks were

looking really stressed. CA asked Cheryl Smith, NCC and plant pathologist, to look into whether the moths could be causing issues in this area.

- CA: getting close to being able to invite people to use Marsh Woods trail. The bridge at the second crossing is the only really challenging thing remaining. If we can't find someone to do the bridge, we are allowed to use stepping stones. There are some really nice ones upstream a little ways that we could move down, perhaps with DK's cart, or sled in winter.
- Our experience with the hybrid meeting was that Zoom participants could hear and see each other well, but could only see those in the center of the table (SD, SM) and had difficulty hearing the in-person audio except for LG, who sat near the laptop. A fully Zoom meeting will allow all participants to be heard and, optionally, to be seen. A standing meeting has now been set up for the Conservation Commission and its subcommittees, which we will plan to use to host our future meetings. It will also allow public participation.
- Assignments:
  - SM & SD to follow up with McLean on asphalt removal and ordering of gate, possible site walk.
  - SM will ask Anderson if he would volunteer to build the bridge.
  - MB & IB to work on Marsh Woods chain saw tasks. CA will provide map and instructions. Work near sand pit will need to be after 11/1.

SM moved to adjourn, DK seconded, all in favor. Adjourned at 7:44.

**Next meeting: Thursday, October 1, 2020 – 6:30 PM, Zoom only**