

Hanover Conservation Commission Trails Committee Minutes, March 10, 2015

Present: Ron Bailey, Ed Chamberlain, Tom Linell, Doug McIlroy, Bill Mlacak, Edd Osgood John Taylor

Short items

McIlroy said that Peter Shumway had returned home after a stay in rehab for a hip broken in a X-C skiing accident, and hoped to be able to attend the next meeting.

Lebanon. McIlroy will be meeting with Mark Goodwin of the Lebanon planning department to discuss possibilities for extending a riverside trail from South Esker to Chambers Park and for Lebanon to take over the Indian Ridge conservation easement. Bailey said that some of the proposed riverfront trail would be easy to build, while some would traverse a steep bank. He said it may be difficult to obtain permission to cross all six affected private parcels.

Balch Hill. On the ground McIlroy ascertained that the rock emplaced in the Fire Trail obstructs the deeded right of way and the "new" fire trail lies almost entirely on town land. Unexplained discrepancies in boundary marks should be checked with the most recent surveyor. Mlacak said the new trail could provide welcome separation from a proposed house even closer to the ROW than the recently demolished one. The matter of accepting the new route and improving it for vehicular access will be discussed at the March Commission meeting.

When the snow clears, Taylor will check the Maple Trail, to assess some sidehill slumping reported by the Balch Hill Stewardship Committee and the erodability of the the proposed realignment of the trail.

Chamberlain had seen a widow-maker hanging over the Grasse Road trail from an abutting property. Linell thought it may have been removed already. Taylor said the Stewardship Committee wants to improve the trail to bring traffic back into a well-defined treadway. Linell said an impediment could be the narrowness of the 10' strip defined in the trail license from Dartmouth. It was pointed out, though, that the historic wall and boundary marker lend interest to that particular alignment.

Rinker Tract. Taylor said that the wide-spreading brook crossing on the Storrs-Rinker Trail appeared to be the result of erosion due to water piling up at a leaf dam behind a stepping stone. McIlroy said that he had installed the stone to reinforce a bank that has since been obliterated, and attributed the spread to erosion by bicycles. In any event, Taylor has asked the Mountain Bike Association to address the problem by building a small bridge that was expected to be part of the bike-loop project.

2015 work plans.

Mlacak asked if McIlroy and Taylor had pulled together a proposal as suggested in February. McIlroy apologized for not having done so. Subsequently it was agreed that they would try again, with participation by DOC's Rory Gawler.

Taylor said that the Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership has offered a (possibly final) round of grants of up to \$25,000 for planning and initial work in connection with the Partnership's master plan. He proposed that some combination of the UVTA, Conservation Commission, Conservancy, and Enfield Commission apply for such a grant in connection with the Ridge Trail. This is an opportunity to seriously move to complete lasting protection for this route. It has been identified as part of a potential side loop at a Partnership planning session. At present there is no guarantee of continuity across some parcels. There is also a need to realign the trail away from habitation alignment near Route 4, and for connection onward. Taylor saw it, too, as a link in a potential loop trail concentric with the on-road Upper Valley Bike Loop.

Taylor foresaw no problem with meeting the implementation requirement. He thought the usual biennial workday there would come close to satisfying it. The committee warmly endorsed the idea. Chamberlain suggested engaging Whit Spaulding, a new Commission member who happens to own an abutting parcel. Linell said that recent activity on the Class VI road near the Plainfield end is a sign that it's none too early to get started. Taylor will approach the other potential players.

Volunteer groups. A previously unrecorded list of already enlisted and likely potential volunteer groups for trail projects was put together:

center; 11. Hypertherm DOC Tuck Boy Scouts Kin Arther Flour CRREL Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association Retail Sales (Enfield) Outdoor Odyssey (UVTA) HHS environmental studies (Earth Day) Youth in Action

The committee has not worked with the last three before, though there is a mountain bike connection at CRREL. Chamberlain will follow up on that one.

Specific projects. Linell said Pipers Lane had sunk out of the committee's view. Bad erosion may need an infusion of hardening material from DPW, as they once talked of providing when there was chance of Boy Scouts doing the associated work.

The DOC's interest in the Harris Trail prompted the inclusion of Rory Gawler in the ad hoc prioritizing group.

Taylor said some more bog bridges could be built on Highway 38 near where it enters the woods from the Dartmouth field. Cost: less than \$100.

DPW expected to correct a wet stretch in the River Trail along Mink Brook. We should check to see that the job is on course.

A second bridge is to be built at Goodwin. We need to see that the UVMBA is on board and what resources the Commission can provide. This is in addition to the Rinker Tract bridge discussed above.

Trails Day. A discussion of what might make a suitable project for Trails Day (first weekend in June) converged on the idea of a public hike to Mascoma Peak on the Ridge Trail instead. One purpose would be to raise awareness of this exhilarating trail. The Conservancy would be a likely cosponsor in view of their current involvement with

parcels the hike would cross. This possibility will be raised with Hugh Mellert at the March CC meeting.