

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, October 6, 2021

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82651305884>

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present: Craig Layne and David Hubbard (facilitator).

Absent: Cody Williams.

Volunteers and members of the public: Stephen Flanders (scribe), George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Peter Griggs, Elisabeth Hammer, Sean Ogle, and Cathie Redpath

AGENDA

1. **Approval of agenda**—Hubbard opened the meeting at 7:05. There were no proposed amendments to the agenda.
2. Comments from those present —There were no comments about items not on the agenda.

Trail infrastructure

3. Conversion of Burton Woods Road segment to a trail—Hubbard introduced the topic. Flanders explained that the recommendation is to expand authorized use to motorized vehicles, weighing under 1,200 lbs.—a weight well above that of ATVs and snow machines. Heavier vehicles would require a permit and the obligation to repair damage to drainage structures.
 - a. Update on discussions with neighbors—Flanders summarized an email in the discussion material from David and Patricia Derrick, wherein they sustained their objection to any redesignation as a trail, instead expressing the desire that the road be made accessible for emergency vehicles and continue to be useable to all classes of motor vehicles. Discussion highlighted the fact that a beaver pond prevents the practical reconnection of the road to Bragg Hill for most vehicles.
 - b. Review scope of draft NTC memo to Selectboard—after a brief discussion the NTC members agreed to discuss the memo with the Norwich Conservation Commission, prior to sending to the selectboard.
4. Update from the UVTA—Ogle gave a brief update on Upper Valley Trails Alliance activities within Norwich. He discussed trail improvements at the Montshire Museum and at the Marion Cross School. He expects further data from the Gile Mountain counter of passers-by.
5. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned: A tree was reported down on the Tucker Trail.
 - a. September 19th – Work on Gile Mountain steps—Faughnan summarized the work that six volunteers performed to replace six rotted steps on the Gile Mountain Trail. The story was written up on the Norwich Trails website at: <https://norwichtrails.org/work-day-september-19-stepping-up-to-the-challenge-on-gile-mountain/>.
6. Trail kiosks—FY 2021-2 Trails budget: \$5,500—Discussion highlighted that the Trails budgetary line item is \$5,500, \$3,000 of which is usually allotted to routine projects, supplemented by private funding sources. This suggests a budget of \$2,500 for the kiosks.

- a. Update progress—Faughnan reported that he had completed a 30-in. by 30-in. proof of concept kiosk and was working on one that displays the agreed-upon 36-in. by 36-in. content. It was agreed that the smaller kiosk would be installed at the upper (Tucker Hill Road) entrance to the Ballard Trail, in from the road. The larger unit will be installed at Brown Schoolhouse Bridge.
- 7. Trail kiosk signage
 - a. Review sample sign—Flanders highlighted the three finalized signs for the Ballard Trail. The NTC approved their production.
 - b. Identify material to be shown—Flanders reported that, since the printing format is 36 by 48 inches, there is a one by three-foot strip on which to print seasonal signs that include advisories for hunting and wintry conditions.
- 8. Work days to schedule:
 - a. October 17th—Grand Canyon crossing—Discussion addressed the work required for the stream crossing plus the need to emplace the temporary bridge near Ballard Park.
- 9. Appalachian Trail Corridor—Flanders read an email from Doug Hardy on this topic, stating “The absolutely overwhelming, consensus opinion of the trail user community is that keeping the intersection (b) and Barred Owl Trail (c) open are high priorities - clearly expressed to the USFS. The Jericho bike trail is also high priority for users, and if "decommissioned" or otherwise closed by USFS or NTC, it will likely not remain so.”
 - a. Report on action from USFS—No action was reported.
 - b. NTC position on Five Points intersection? A draft memo on the November agenda will be presented.
 - c. NTC position on Barred Owl/Jericho Trail? A draft memo on the November agenda will be presented.

Financial

- 10. Planning for FY 2022-23 budget: Parking—The Norwich Conservation Commission will discuss a budgetary supplement for the following parking areas:
 - a. Gile Mountain (high priority)
 - b. Burton Woods (contingent on availability of parking on nearby private land)
 - c. Elm Street (potentially within the scope of a typical highway budget)
 - d. Happy Hill Road (contingent on how much parking remains after allotting space for a vehicle turn-around).
- 11. Trails infrastructure budget—Expected to remain the same at \$3,000.

Other

- 12. Report on Norwich Historical Society September 11 Community Organization Fair
- 13. Hunting season notices—The draft hunting season notice was approved.
- 14. Items for November meeting
 - a. Schedule construction and installation of remaining kiosks
 - b. Confirm signage for kiosks
 - c. Developing a trails master plan, as required by the 2020 Norwich Town Plan.
- 15. Items for future meetings

16. Adjourn

Adjourned at 8:05 pm