

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, April 5, 2023

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89255864325>

Attendees: (by Zoom)

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present: Cody Williams, Craig Layne and David Hubbard.

Volunteers and members of the public: George Clark, Bob Fiskens, Jim Faughnan, Stephen Flanders (scribe), Peter Griggs, Elisabeth Hammer, Nick Krembs (facilitator), John McCormick, and Sean Ogle

AGENDA

1. **Approval of agenda:** The facilitator, Krembs, opened the meeting at 7:00 and proposed adding discussion of the status of Parcel 5 as a ski trail under Comments (2).
2. Comments from those present: Krembs cited an email received from a trail user of Parcel 5, who recommended improvements at two locations to make cross-country skiing safer. It was noted that grooming was the best approach to accommodating skier safety, but snow conditions did not always permit such treatment. After discussion, it was agreed that a site visit will be arranged with the correspondent in May.

Town initiatives

3. Krembs asked Layne to provide updates on the following items of interest.
 - Gile Mountain Parking—Flanders asked whether the NTC should seek enlargement of the parking lot. After discussion about directly asking the selectboard, versus petitioning a warrant article for March 2024, it was agreed that NTC need not press this issue on either front.
 - Schmidt Bog—Layne reported that residents in the neighborhood advocate for preserving the current status of the natural area and are active in maintaining a trail network around and through it—the latter via a boardwalk. This approach may be revisited if the Norwich Conservation Commission decides to explore a restoration of the area's natural condition by removing invasive species.
 - Burton Woods Road—After some discussion of how to implement water-control structures that would withstand the occasional passage of all-terrain vehicles, it was agreed that the NTC should renew its request of the selectboard to lower the weight limits on the road to bar passage by road vehicles.
 - Woody Adams parcel—Layne reported that kiosk and trail signage will be needed to complete the project. Flanders volunteered to assist in the kiosk signage. A May inspection will assess any further improvements or maintenance required.

Infrastructure

4. Update from the UVTA: Ogle reported that the organization is acquiring more tools. He will have more to report in May.
5. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned:
Faughnan reported the Brown Schoolhouse Trail has been cleared of blockages and that a few trees require action on the Ballard trail. Krembs will mobilize some community

volunteer labor to address the Ballard Trail.

Hammer reported some downed trees at the entrance of the Barred Owl Trail and at the intersection of the Cossingham Trail and Joshua Road.

Fisken will take care of some windfalls on the Hazen Trail.

6. Trail projects for 2023: Krembs proposed the following list of projects for discussion at subsequent meetings
 - Heyl Trail—Relocation of segments surveyed in 2022. Proposed for May 21.
 - Gile Mountain Trail—Cleaning out of ditching. Proposed for April 23.
 - Blue Ribbon Trail—Completion of blazing (not discussed).
 - Woody Adams Parcel—Completion of trail work (discussed above).
7. Update on kiosks and trails signage: Faughnan will resume building kiosks for the following trails, starting in April:
 - Burton Woods at Bragg Hill Road
 - Heyl Trail at Elm Street and Bragg Hill Road
 - Powers Trail

Financial

8. Plan for funding in Trails line item in Conservation Commission budget:
Hubbard reported the following break-out for the \$1,800 “Trails” line item for the Norwich Conservation Commission in the approved town budget: Kiosks (\$400), bridging material (\$900), and trail maintenance (\$500).
Faughnan suggested replacement of the hemlock bridge at the entrance to the Ballard Trail from Ballard Park. Hubbard requested a half-page cost summary of the materials required in order to requisition them from the current fiscal year budget.

Other

9. Scribe successorship: Flanders asked for someone to consider taking over the role in September.
10. Future meeting venues: After some discussion, Hubbard moved and Williams seconded that future meetings be held at the Norwich Historical Society. The motion passed unanimously. The NTC and trails volunteers thank the NHS for its generosity in providing meeting space. The plan is to provide a Zoom link to allow remote attendance, as well.
11. Hubbard reported that the Norwich Prudential Committee, overseeing the town forest, agreed to an arrangement with an abutter to connect from his land to the Connector Trail between Blue Ribbon and Brookmead. In exchange, he will give access to a new trail that forms a loop with the Connector Trail and provides an additional stream crossing site.
- 12. Adjourn:** Krembs adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.