

Lee Trails Committee Minutes

March 8, 2021 7 PM

Chair Deb Sugerman opened the meeting by reading the following statement:

"As Chair of the Conservation Commission, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is meeting electronically utilizing the Zoom platform. We previously gave notice to the public of how to access this meeting using Zoom and instructions are provided on the Town of Lee's website at: www.leenh.org. If anybody has a problem with access, please call 603-234-8194. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law."

Present and with no one else present in their respective rooms:

Members:

Deb Sugerman (Chair), Ben Lilyestrom, Chris Regan, Dan Mayton, Dan Couture, Dennis Regan, Kent Kasper, Leslie Chinburg, Lisa Speropolous, Martin Thornton, Paul McComiskey, Tom Hooper

Technical Assistance: Caren Rossi, Planning, Zoning, and Health Administrator

Approval of Minutes of February 8, 2021: Chris Regan moved to accept the minutes as written, Dan Couture, seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Reports

- **Conservation Commission Report**

Deb Sugerman discussed how we need to work within the Municipal Process for approval of our actions. Decisions to make changes to town property, contact other Departments, start on projects need to be submitted through Deb to the Conservation Commission. When they approve, the information can be sent to the appropriate town department. The Select Board has the final say and is ultimately responsible for any changes that occur in the town. Copy Deb Sugerman on approved correspondence and follow up on approved verbal communications with a summary.

The Conservation Commission was impressed with the enthusiasm of the Trails Committee and it has motivated them to start looking at doing updates and boundary reviews of town land. Other areas that have potential for the Trails Committee to work on will be the Old Mill Reserve and the Oyster River Reserve

- **Trail Group reports**

- **Maud Jones (MJF)** > Martin Thornton reported on the following Activities

- Kent Kasper and Martin Thornton have been researching material from the US Forestry Service and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) on Trail Maintenance and Building. Open Source material has been posted to the Lee Trails Committee share site.
- Martin Thornton put together a project plan (Gantt chart) for the activities and posted to the Maud Jones Forest share site.
- Lisa Speropolous will be working with the Mast Way School on suggesting names for the trails in the Maud Jones Forest. Dennis Regan suggested the Historical Society be involved. There was general discussion on whether to open this up to complete town for naming or break it up into separate projects for each

area. Consensus was to use the Maud Jones Forest as a Pilot program, keep it simple and achievable to learn from, then look at the other areas as broader participation by the town. Lisa Speropolous will put together a plan and review with Deb Sugerman

- An updated Condition Report was posted by Kent Kasper documenting the tree that blew down in the forest. Martin Thornton brought up the Condition reports need to be a living document that gets updated throughout the year. Different ideas were discussed on how the document should be maintained and it should be open for anyone in the Trails committee to be able to update along with the date and who did the update. Dennis Regin suggested completed tasks are removed from the list and placed in a historical section. Martin Thornton will look into making it into a task list.
- A Zoom meeting was sponsored by Deb Sugerman with Don Quigley (Lee Town Forester) who reviewed the history of the Maud Jones Forest. He will be doing a walk through with the MJF group once the snow is gone.
- Martin Thornton is putting together plans for 8, 10, and 15 ft bridge plans along with cost estimates using the guidance from the US Forestry Service. The plans and cost details are being posted to the MJF share site as they are completed.
- o **Town Forest (TF)** > Dan Couture reported on the following Activities
 - Established the Google Doc site for shared documents
 - Update of maps for accuracy. Dan Couture, Kent Kasper, and Dennis Regan have been looking at CalTopo program to assist with creating new maps. The TF group will then field test the map for accuracy
 - Deb Sugerman said Catherine Fisher has volunteered to walk the trails with the TF group. She has been involved with the area and early trail layouts, bridge building, and knows a lot of the history of the trails. A future walk through date will be set.
- o **Little River Park (LRP)** > Paul McComiskey reported on the following Activities
 - Noted there is a tree down on the River Trail. The path is passable but will need cleaned up when the weather gets warmer. Paul McComiskey moved the bulk of the branches out of the trail
 - The group is planning on sprucing up the trails, pruning, stick & branch removal (Deb Sugerman mentioned removal of the metal markers), and better marking of the trail blazes.
 - Dan Mayton asked about the chainsaw policy. Only the Town Public Works (PW) personnel may use for liability reasons. Requests need to follow the process through Deb Sugerman to Ann Tappan to the PW Director Steve Bullek.
- **Website update** > Dan Couture reported on the research he has done on the Conservation and Trails websites. He set up a folder on the Lee Trails Committee share site of his findings to date. He reached out to the Town Administrator Julie Glover for additional details. See Deb Sugerman's earlier comments on the municipal process and that will be followed going forward. He did note the Barrington Trails site is a separate site from the town site. The link on the Barrington town site is to this separate site. He will look at making up a sand box mock up site for development work and input from the group that can then be presented to the appropriate people in the town organization for approval before anything goes out to the public.
- **Mapping update** > Kent Kasper shared his screen to show the CalTopo map program and reported on his research into creating new maps. There is a free mapping tool CalTopo that can be run on the computer or on a cell phone. You can output pdf, LTF, or gpx files. You can work

with various layers: Ariel, 10 ft contour lines, Wetlands, and Shading for elevation. You can turn on the App and use it to follow the trail. He found the trails were already in the App. Sample maps were placed in each group's share folders. Tom Hooper said the App is used for the runners in events that he sponsors. Kent Kasper and Tom Hooper will work together on how to apply this program. Dan Couture noted the map files are taken from the Open Street Maps program. If we upload updates there, they will eventually migrate to the CalTopo program.

The other useful program he found was the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) (arccgis.com) which shows the tax map for the town and has the conservation property overlays. You can click on the abutters to the town land to see who is the owner. Caren mentioned that those maps are sometimes behind and you should verify with the town offices the correct land owner. Follow the process before contacting any land owners.

Tom Hooper suggested we output our own gpx files for the trails. The suggestion was made to place a QR code at the beginning of the trail that someone could scan in before heading down the trail.

- **Project plan update** > Martin Thornton shared his screen and showed how he accumulated the various emails and notes into a Project plan for the MJF. The Plan shows the Projects, Activities, Lead Person, and Start/Finish Dates and will be used to coordinate and plan the work on the trail. Since Google Docs did not have a Project Planner the file was set up as a spreadsheet.
- **Other updates**
 - Private Trail Development** > Dan Mayton and Tom Hooper. There is interest by the neighborhood on Tuttle Rd to establish a trail from Wadleigh Falls up to the Little River Park. The trail system will be on private land. Caren Rossi will assist in verifying who the proper land owners are on the properties the trail will cross. Martin Thornton mentioned the AMC Guide had a good section on right of way permissions and documentation needed to ensure the trail can exist should individual owners change.

New Business

- **NH Bureau of Trails Grants** > Deb Sugerman reported there is available money for trail projects. She will work on putting an initial proposal together for building five new kiosks. Dennis Regan mentioned with the documentation on the activities the group is doing would be a big factor on being approved for the project.
- **Emerald Ash Borer Field Workshop** > Deb Sugerman reported this will be held March 20th. It was in response to the discovery of the beetles in the town lands and would be beneficial for the committee members to attend. Deb Sugarbush, Dan Couture, and Martin Thornton have already signed up.
- **March plan for Trail Groups** > Deb Sugerman requested groups start working toward planning their first work sessions. It is important to have some visible progress on the improvements to the trails.
 - MJF: Kiosk Updates, QR codes for Natural Features, and clear fallen branches. Caren Rossi will review with the town officials what the process will be to establish a new trail to incorporate the boulder and Rt 155 area.
 - LRP: Kiosk Updates, QR codes for Natural Features, Prune and clear fallen branches.
 - TF: Meet up with Catherine Fisher and on your own and tour the trails
 - There are an additional 25 people that have signed up to assist on trail projects. We should start small and basic then can expand as we gain experience

- o In regards to where is the line on what we can do and what needs to be approved. Different options on cutting trees were discussed but for now we will follow the process of the chain of command to notify Steve Bullek of the need. There was a request that we need to clarify what work can be done by the groups (pruning, blazes), what is questionable (hand saws, erosion control) and what only town employees should handle. Caren Rossi will follow up with the town officials to help provide guidance.

Next Meeting: April 12, 2021, Monday

Submitted by: _____
Martin Thornton