



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department  
6 Baboosic Lake Road  
Town Hall - Lower level - East Wing

603 424-3531  
Fax 603 424-1408  
[www.merrimacknh.gov](http://www.merrimacknh.gov)

Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## **Horse Hill Nature Preserve (Subcommittee of the Merrimack Conservation Commission) Minutes for Wednesday, June 29, 2022 Memorial Room 7:00pm**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Subcommittee Chair Marc Gagnon. Note that this meeting was originally scheduled for June 21; it was rescheduled due to room availability.

**Members present:** Marc Gagnon, Christine Nazaka, Ellen Kolb (ex-officio), Tim Adams (alternate)

**Members absent:** Eric Starr, Lynne Wenz

**Chair Gagnon asked Tim Adams to serve as a voting member for this meeting.**

**Guest:** Chris Gaudet, president of Southern New Hampshire chapter of New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA)

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**Public Comment:** None

**Minutes:** The draft minutes of the subcommittee meeting on 22 February 2022 were approved after amending the word "Attendees" to "Members" on page 1. Vote was 4-0 on a motion by Ms. Kolb seconded by Mr. Adams.

### **Discussion with Chris Gaudet of NEMBA:**

Between Covid factors and changes in leadership, there has been a lag in the former working relationship between the HHNP subcommittee and NEMBA. Mr. Gaudet expressed NEMBA's willingness to revive cooperation, communications, and possible assistance with trail projects. He succeeded Matt Caron, former Merrimack Conservation Commission member, as leader of the Southern New Hampshire chapter of NEMBA.

NEMBA is a nonprofit agency working with conservation commissions and landowners to meet its mission of mountain bike trail development, advocacy, and community support. Some of NEMBA's scheduled events have taken place on HHNP trails, so NEMBA has an interest in supporting trail maintenance. NEMBA encourages responsible trail use.

He noted that not all mountain bike riders belong to NEMBA. In particular, recent unauthorized trail development at the Fields Farm property has not been performed by NEMBA. He stressed that NEMBA gets landowner permission for any project it works on.

Chair Gagnon suggested a site walk at HHNP to identify areas that need work and to prioritize projects. Once those have been identified, the subcommittee can seek NEMBA assistance for appropriate projects. Mr. Gaudet said that NEMBA has a small snow groomer that might be useful on HHNP trails, upon request of MCC or the subcommittee.

No motions were made. Subcommittee consensus is that we welcome NEMBA cooperation.

#### **Open Action Items/Status Updates:**

- **QR code update (Christine):** Eric Starr has information on lamination and budgeting for the QR codes to be mounted at trail junctions; he is absent from this meeting.
- **Etched metal map update (Lynne):** she is absent from this meeting.
- **Invasive species report follow-up (Tim):** he has done some cutting of multiflora rose and bittersweet. He and Marc will work together over the next few months on this project. He noted that if the town has a tractor with a side mower, it could make quick work of dense growth along the trail near the Amherst Road entrance.
- **Kiosk Refresh (Marc):** he has picked up a sheet of Lexan purchased by the town, and he will cut it to size soon.

#### **Other New Business:**

- **Plan for site walk for project planning:** subcommittee members will meet at 10 a.m. on Sunday, July 10 at the Amherst Road entrance to HHNP for a walk to inspect conditions along trails and bridges. This will help with setting priorities for projects.
- **Invasive plants:** multiflora rose and bittersweet remain our targets. As noted above, Tim and Marc will work together on this.
- **Boundary marking project plan:** An area of particular concern is near Farmer Road. The current Eversource work on the power line right-of-way through HHNP might clear some areas where markers are now obscured. Some markers might be spotted during the July 10 site walk.
- **Watanic Bowmen event calendar:** no information available. There has been no recent contact with the group.

#### **Committee member roundtable/comments:**

- **Fields Farm (Marc):** people have built trails there without MCC permission, but there's no one in charge. What does the deed say about property use? It is unclear now whether access is allowed. If the HHNP subcommittee is to take on responsibility for overseeing Fields Farm, we need more information. Ellen will ask MCC at its July 11 meeting if there is a subcommittee charter that would need to be revised to add Fields Farm, and she'll ask about how a master plan's development would fit into the subcommittee's tasks.
- **Powerline work by Eversource (electric utility):** everyone present expressed concern about the tower replacement project on the Eversource right-of-way through HHNP. It has cut off north-to-south routes through HHNP, particularly the Loop Trail. No one on MCC received advance notice of the dates or schedule for this work. Ellen will contact Community Development to seek more information. Marc will create signs for trailheads to warn trail users about the construction and the Loop Trail cutoff.
- **Maps (Ellen):** Ellen brought a supply of HHNP maps for subcommittee members to distribute.

- **Possible Scout project (Tim):** Tim has identified a possible project for a Scout or similar individual looking for a service project. There's a location near Plumber Trail and Long Pond where beaver activity has opened up a vista. This could be a good spot for a bench.

**Action Items for report at next meeting:**

- QR code update (Christine, Eric)
- Kiosk refresh, tree work, signs about Eversource construction (Marc)
- Confirm policy for members who miss multiple meetings (Ellen)
- Report from July 10 site walk
- Report from MCC about Fields Farm status (Ellen)

**Next meeting:** September 6, 2022 7:00p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43p.m. on a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Ms. Nazaka.

Submitted by Ellen Kolb