

**TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES FEBRUARY 27, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 12:09.

Present: Nelson Disco, Peter Flood, Davis Powell, Karen Freed, Jackie Flood. **Guest:** Lelia Mellen. **Excused:** Bill Wilkes. **Absent:** Finlay Rothhaus, Mary Hendricks.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of January 23 were approved with one spelling error corrected.

Merrimack Winter Carnival: The event was a big success with about 300 people attending in good weather. The Town Center Committee had a good sized setup with several maps of trails, close-ups and overviews. Many people looked at them; several took maps of the fire station area showing how to access the Souhegan Riverwalk Trail. This outreach effort was worth the effort and will bring people to the trail.

To continue our mission to bring people into the center of town to the parks and trails that are being introduced regularly:

- Karen Freed will put trail and sidewalk maps into the library.
- Davis Powell suggested the summer Farmers' Market; we agreed that it would be worthwhile to have a table from time to time. Jackie will find out whether there will be a fee, and how much it would be.
- Karen suggested the Fourth of July. We agreed.

Old Business: Status of Safe Routes to School: Davis reported that the next funding application deadline is in July for TAP funds.

Status of TAP award: The TAP program has given us official notice of the sluice trail funding.

Merrill's Marauders sign: Karen said that it would be easy to eliminate excess words from the sign. We discussed the "QR" code and agreed that it should be on the sign so that hikers can access the Merrill's Marauders website easily. The code can be any size and can be registered. She will

check the similar sign at Watson Park, measure it and determine what size we should have at the footbridge.

Lelia said that Field's Pond Foundation funds trail projects. She will inquire about it and also start working on the signage for the sluiceway. . Karen said that in her research preparing for the sign, she found that Pennichuck Water Works donated the last part of the dam and river to us where the trail will cross under Route 3.

New Business: National Park Service assistance for art projects: Lelia reported that the National Endowment turns 50 this year, and the National Park Service is 100 next year and has offered a grant opportunity. There are several categories of eligible projects including:

- An event or project to encourage young people to get outside, preferably at a National Park.
- Something special for urban areas in parks.
- Schools hosting art and culture projects.

The grants offered are \$10,000 - \$100,000, the deadlines are February, 2015 and July; there is some ambiguity on which deadline would pertain to us.

There was discussion on the topic. We agreed that an Art in the Park event would need more time to get together, even for 2016, to fill out an application. The dollars offered aren't a fit; it seems more fitting for a larger town or city. The schools might be interested if it is offered next year, however. Davis will bring back the idea.

The Committee was interested in looking further into a special event for mid-2016. Karen said that it should not interfere with other towns. Jackie will speak to members of the League of Craftsmen who live in town. Her opinion is that \$2500 would go a long way.

Alternate bridge concept: Peter pointed out that the bridge in Twin Bridge Park over Baboosic Brook is huge in comparison to what we need at the

Souhegan River Walk Trail. Lelia said that the Spring high water time is a good time to look at the bog bridge site. Nelson would like to span the whole gully. We looked at pictures of small bridges that Lelia had provided last month. She pointed out that state bridge money can put emphasis on strength to hold vehicles, or durability or size.

Other projects for consideration – 2015: Nelson said that our charter still needs working on, for example sidewalks. There are gaps throughout the Town Center. McGaw Bridge, slated for 2016, will give a safe alternative to crossing Baboosic Brook. Twin Bridge could provide another alternative passage, too. Building a sidewalk in front of the Commons is difficult because of the steep slope, but using a walk in front of the shops could work.

Public Outreach: Peter suggested a new map from the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to explain the maps and trails. They could highlight the big features. The Town Center area is from Front Street to Fraser Square. Peter thinks the NRPC has a big investment because of a member spending a year establishing this committee. NRPC is doing a map of the “walk ability”, a map of sidewalks. Maybe we could spend our small kitty on it if we need to.

There were no members of the public present.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2015, at noon in the Matthew Thornton Room.

We adjourned at 1:18.