

## HORSEHILL NATURE PRESERVE

Meeting minutes, 04/09/2018

Matthew Thornton room

In attendance: Peter Mikolajczuk, Lynn Wenz, Cindy Glenn, Don Laliberty, Tim Adams and Rose Shajenko.

Guests: Bruce Peterson, Matt Caron

1. Peter called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.
2. Cindy passed out large maps that she had received from Gage, to be used for the purpose of making changes for updating versions of HHNP map. She will drop off maps to Amherst kiosk and drop off maps to Roland.
3. Cindy reported to committee that an order for maps for HHNP will be placed, should only take a few weeks to come in and costs need to be approved.
4. Cindy passed out a copy of "Merrimack Conservation Commission Charge of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve Sub-Committee" dated Dec. 21, 2015.
5. Don brought up that Goodale's Bike Shop has their own map for HHNP with random named trails on it. Then Peter informed us that there are mobile apps. for Strava, Garmin & Nike. Bikes have ability to call trails whatever they like, and is used to time and track their ride.
6. Don discussed: How do Bike Demo Days, Snowshoe Races and Meet-ups communicate to our committee that they will be going to HHNP? In the past for example the couple that were getting married at the top of Horse Hill went to The Merrimack Conservation Commission (MCC) for approval.
7. Don addressed the committee about the challenges with the "Eversource Improvement Project" (EIP). He and Bruce P. first noticed the work taking place on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>. Looking at deeded easement, lumber and pole number 113 – near beaver pond- concerns overstepped boundaries. Looking into if Eversource minimized their plans; Don has brought this up at two MCC meetings. Don then passed on to Gage Perry; that he had spoken to Edgar the site supervisor, who referred Matt Flanders at Eversource as being the contact person. At the March 5<sup>th</sup> MCC meeting, after Don's presentation, Chairman Gage Perry said he would send out a letter to Eversource. Three concerns for EIP: Communication, Signage and Gate potential.

First concern of lacking communication. First posting on town website was on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> for work starting with Eversource on Feb. 12, 2018. In the minutes from the town council meeting on May 11, 2017, "Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted the W157 power line runs through the Grater Road property and the 380 runs through the Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP)." "In terms of outreach and communication, Eversource has an open-door policy. Efforts are made to inform the community. They work with the Town, landowners, businesses, other key stakeholders such as conservation commissions where applicable, etc. Communication is ongoing. They meet with the Towns, send letters to landowners, have an open hot line, and an email address available. Ms. Hoodlet stated outreach would likely begin the following day." Per Don concerning

communications, our HHNP subcommittee should have been informed of “Eversouce Improvement Project”, committee was not informed about plans from town meeting of May 11 or thereafter. Don wants to make note of: Tower # 119 – coming from Peaslee Road, Tower # 114, 115 & 116 (large area of water in between).

Second concern is lack of signage for work being done in HHNP by Eversouce. Committee’s responsibility is the safety of individuals whom frequent park. Eversouce had stated that signs would be put up when work was being done, but not were.

Third concern is the need for potential gate. Because Eversouce put in a road, the trail is now four times wider than before to Old Kings Highway. Since Old Kings Highway crosses powerlines, Bruce P. suggests putting up a sign saying that this is HHNP property. There are only three orange cones up at Naticook Road, where this new road begins. Don’s concern is that ATV’s will start using the new road to go into HHNP.

The Missouri contractor has left before a fourth possible snow storm. Removing all of their equipment. Another concern is that this work was brought forth to be done during the winter season. Lynn talked about working with NH Fish and Game with trapping turtles, weighing and so forth so that now we have an abundance of spotted turtles in our wetlands. Would such animals have to be relocated when Eversouce begins again?

Don informed the committee, that he found 75 brass and Luger casings, at the end of March near Tower 113 in HHNP. Shooting is not allowed. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> Don met with Merrimack Police Officer Sullivan to share what happened.

MOTION by Peter and seconded by Tim that Don be our liaison with Eversource Improvement Project and keep the subcommittee updated and Merrimack Conservation Commission. The vote was 7 yes, 2 abstain.

Matt Caron said “The Merrimack Conservation Commission appreciates Don’s work that he has done”.

8. Don put forth to the committee “How to minimize use of trails that are wet and muddy year round. Eastern side Loop Trail Bypass has been closed because it is too wet. Need to inquire with Merrimack Police Dept. to see if they have been riding around the park because of some noted erosion that has been noted. Talked about bridge by White Pine Swamp Trail needing work done on it. For temporary solution, tree branches have been placed down. Tim wants to go out and rack a few areas. And plans to recut the multiflora. Peter noted that he will watch the weather, in order to find best time to take down mud season signage.
9. Don discusses: How relevant is HHNP subcommittee today? Don seeks a better communication system, stressing important link with town council. How do we find out what is happening with town council. Matt Caron suggests that we go to business meeting minutes and do a search for topics that concern us. Regarding the organization NIMBA, Peter was asked if he is notified

when trail work is being done. He said yes, and was asked to be NIMBA's representative to keep the committee in the loop and Peter has agreed. Lastly, our committee is only relevant if communication passes both ways, in order to preserve the park and make sure users have a safe experience.

10. Matt Caron and Peter discussed if the new trail has to be wide enough for multi-use. Since no horses or snowmobiles have been on it then it's been determined that it's not going to be multi-use. Matt stated that the bridge across from Horse Hill Summit needs a twelve foot overpass over old trail, used for drainage. This overpass will not be multi-use. Work on this may begin as early as this coming Saturday (look for email).

MOTION by Peter seconded by Tim that a sign be placed at the top of trail: Regrowth area please use other trail. Unanimous yes

11. Tim put out a new log book at the Amherst kiosk. Peter Mikolajczuk is the contact name in the book, i.e. Tree is down on the trail.
12. Rose has volunteered to remove the dead insects from the inside of the Kiosk at Amherst Road parking lot. Lynne has agreed to be keeper of the key to above Kiosk. She will ask Roland for the key.
13. Tim plans to post a hike a Horse Hill on Merrimack Outdoors for the month of May on their website.

MOTION by Peter seconded by Tim that meeting minutes for January 29, 2018 be tabled to next meeting on July 9, 2018. Unanimous yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 by a motion brought by Peter, Rose seconded the motion, and all were in favor.