



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## **Horse Hill Nature Preserve Subcommittee of the Merrimack Conservation Commission**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

**April 8, 2013**

**7:00 p.m. Matthew Thornton Meeting Room**

**Attendees:** Newton Coryell, Matt Caron, Lynne Wenz, Adrian Cote, Debra Huffman

**Guests:** Chris Mergemekes, Nat Fairbanks

**Call to order:** Chairman Newt Coryell called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Disk Golf:** Chris Mergemekes presented information on the game of Disc Golf. He would like to establish a course in Merrimack and asked if HHNP might be a good location. He stated that Disc Golf is a passive recreational activity enjoyed by all ages, and there are many disc golfers in Merrimack and they currently have to drive quite far to find a course. Nat Fairbanks, a Merrimack resident, confirmed that there are several residents who would make use of a course. They prefer a wooded course with wide walkways, such as old woods roads. Participants are responsible for maintenance of the course and pedestrians have right of way. The committee stated that they felt there are many town properties in Merrimack that might be appropriate for a course. Matt Caron volunteered to walk various town properties with Chris and Nat to help them find a good location.

**Volunteers:** Debra Huffman stated that the eagle scout candidate is not interested in the sign project (placing signs on the new trail off Greens Pond Rd). The committee decided to offer him a project to build a wildlife blind, a high bench behind the blind, and a small bridge on the trail near the blind. Lynne Wenz distributed a sketch and pictures of potential designs for the wildlife blind. Debra will contact the scout to see if he's interested in the project.

**New Trails:** Matt Caron reported that he has flagged a potential route for the new trail on the west side of Blodgett Hill. Debra Huffman expressed concern that the trail will include too many switchbacks, which is interesting for mountain bikers and runners but is not as enjoyable for walkers. Matt stated that the slope of the hill requires many switchbacks to prevent erosion. Adrian Cote stated that hikers and snowmobilers will still be able to use

the existing trail near the rock wall. The committee will walk the proposed trail route prior to the next meeting.

**New Development:** A new development is being designed in the area of Pollard Road, abutting HHNP. When the development is discussed at the Merrimack Conservation Commission, Matt Caron will ask the developer to ensure that the new owners understand the rules of HHNP, and will ask that an easement be granted for access to HHNP.

**Trail Markers:** Newt Coryell reported that the state will not give or sell him the orange diamond-shaped markers for the trail. The committee will ask a volunteer group to refresh the white painted markers, and will direct them to space them farther apart than the current markers.

**Culvert Near Abby Lane:** Matt Caron reported that the culvert continues to be clogged by beaver. He has to clear it out frequently. Newt Coryell will look for a new culvert, 12" by 16', with a smooth surface.

**Trail Closures:** Newt Coryell reported that he put up the Trail Closed to Bikes and Horses signs, and they will stay up until the land dries out, probably mid-May. Lynne Wenz stated that it is also time to put up the Trail Closed signs near the heron nests.

It was reported that several mountain bikes and horses have been on the closed trails. The committee decided that users were not seeing the signs. They will place them in more prominent locations.

**Trail Report:** Matt Caron reported that water erosion has become a major problem on the trail behind Abbey Lane ever since a neighbor cut the trees on his property. Matt states that the trail looks like a river at times. The best solution would be to divert the water back to its original course. (It was diverted by a previous landowner.) The committee will design a solution and will present it to the current owners of the abutting property. The committee will add this item to the 2013 To Do List.

Matt also reported that there are muddy areas on many of the trails, and the area around Post 9 is particularly bad.

**ATVs/Dirt Bikes:** Matt Caron reported that he followed two dirt bikes coming out of HHNP and got their license plate numbers. He reported them to the police and the police visited one of the owners of the bikes and advised them of the HHNP restrictions. The police said that they have received several complaints about ATVs and dirt bikes recently.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of January 28, 2013, were approved as presented by a vote of 5-0-1 with Lynne Wenz abstaining.

**Comments from Members:**

- Newt Coryell reported that subcommittee members no longer need to be sworn in. They have to sign a form stating that they understand the ethics guidelines. He also stated that he has received a check from Mike Amarillo's latest snowshoe race.
- Matt Caron stated that the Grater Woods Plan is done. As users begin to visit Grater Woods, there should be fewer visitors to HHNP, which will be helpful on busy days.
- Adrian Cote stated that he believes runners now outnumber mountain bikers on HHNP.
- Debra Huffman stated that she and Roland Roberge had a table at the Winter Carnival. She had new maps made for the HHNP kiosks and will submit a bill for \$121 to be paid by the HHNP account.
- Lynne Wenz stated that moose have been visiting the Tomasian's land next to the town parcel.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on June 3rd, 2013.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.