

Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

Horse Hill Nature Preserve Subcommittee of the Merrimack Conservation Commission Minutes of the Meeting January 21st, 2016 7:00 p.m. Memorial Conference Room

Attendees: Newton Coryell, Roland Roberge, Sharon Hickey, Lynne Wenz, Peter Mikolajczuk, Cindy Glenn, Amanda Yonkin, Debra Huffman

Guests: Don Laliberte, Richard Maloon, Tim Tenhave, Matt Caron, Betty Philo

Call to order: Chairman Newt Coryell called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Volunteers: Debra Huffman did not have any update on volunteer activities.

New Committee Charge: Tim Tenhave stated that the Merrimack Conservation Commission has written a charge for the HHNP subcommittee, following the model established for other MCC subcommittees. The charge varies from others in the membership requirements, with HHNP having seven members and three alternates, all with three year terms.

Attendance: Newt Coryell spoke about the new attendance requirements in the new committee charge. Members are expected to attend a minimum of one out of every three committee meetings. If a member does not meet the attendance requirement, the subcommittee chairman will advise the MCC of the attendance issue. The MCC will take appropriate action.

Spring Mud Season: A subcommittee consisting of Peter Mikolajczuk, Lynne Wenz and Debra Huffman will monitor the condition of the trails this spring to determine when to put up the signs prohibiting bike and horse use, and when to remove the signs. There was general discussion about whether pedestrian use should also be prohibited in certain areas. Tim Tenhave advised the committee to track wet spots and the MCC will consider providing money for trail improvement in those areas.

Dog Waste: Roland Roberge stated that the problem with dog waste bags being left on the trail has improved significantly this year. Tim Tenhave noted that leaving dog waste violates a town ordinance, so the offense should be reported to the MPD. Matt Caron noted that there is a trash can at Wasserman Park and it is filled with dog waste bags. Tim Tenhave noted that Wildcat Falls now has a trash can, and the Public Works Department empties it. Lynne Wenz noted that

dog parks have disposal units with baggies. The committee decided that if there is a dog waste problem in the future that a trash can might be appropriate.

Projects by MCC Members: It was generally agreed that if an MCC member conducts a project on HHNP, that person should notify the HHNP chairman. The chairman should be aware of any trail work or other projects being conducted on HHNP. Tim Tenhave stated that if there is a problem, he should be notified.

Snow Shoe Race: This year's 3C Race Productions snow shoe race will be on February 7th at 10:00 a.m. Newt provides a copy of the insurance binder to the town each year, and Tim Tenhave requested that a copy also be sent to the MCC. He also requested that Newt advise the MPD of the race date. He also requested that Cindy add the event to the MCC's website. Newt will provide the contact information between Cindy and Mike of 3C Race Productions.

Scout Project at the Spalding Foundation: Peter Mikolajczuk has e-mailed the scout (Blake) and is waiting to hear back from him. Peter has looked at the site and reports that the fence is broken and trees are down in the area. Peter will contact Blake again. Newt reported that Anita Craeger has stated that the Heritage Commission and the Historical Society do not have the manpower to get involved with the Spalding foundation. Newt also reported that Home Depot is looking for projects in which they can provide support. Peter will convey that information to Blake. Richard Maloon reported that there was a sign on the fence several years ago but the sign seems to be gone now.

Parking Lot Expansion: Tim Tenhave provided a status update on this project. The MCC has asked Kyle Fox to prepare an RFP for a 40 spot and 50 spot parking lot, using gravel instead of paving. Newt noted that gravel should be fine, since the existing gravel parking lot has only been regraded twice in ten years. They expect to have the RFP by the MCC's March meeting. The MCC will evaluate the responses and may select one or may not, depending on the cost. He stated that the MCC is generally supportive of the project.

Roland Roberge noted that the gate in the parking lot has been hit and now has a bow. Newt placed poles in front of the kiosk and bench, and noted that the poles are spreading out and should be straightened in spring.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of October 12th, 2015, were approved as presented by a vote of 5-0-3. Cindy Glenn stated that she will post the minutes on the MCC website.

Future Meeting Dates: The dates of the next HHNP meetings will be April 11th, July 11th, and October 10th, all in the Matthew Thornton Room.

Comments: Don Laliberte stated that he has been going on night hikes on HHNP and he saw an all-white Snowshoe Hare. He also saw several "fire tacks" left in trees, probably by hunters.

Lynne Wenz asked about the policy on tree stands. Tim Tenhave stated that by state law any stand that is nailed into a tree requires permission from the Town Council. If it is just strapped to the tree permission isn't required, but the owner's name must be on the stand. If there is a problem with a strapped stand, Todd with NH Fish and Game should be contacted and he will speak with the hunter.

Betty Philo stated that she attended the meeting to hear about the parking lot.

Matt Caron reported that he saw a group of about 35 hikers called the Four Season Hikers, and they said that they hike HHNP often. He also saw two Snowshoe Hares. He noted that the beaver has again damned up the stream by the Bradish bridge. The committee decided that they will have to do something about it this spring. Peter noted that the Spring Mud Season committee can keep an eye on it, and the committee can consider re-routing the trail.

Newt Coryell thanked Peter for fixing a portion of the trail. Peter stated that he will be moving the leftover material.

Richard Maloon volunteered to mark the HHNP perimeter whenever any others want to resume the task. He has the markers from last year, when the committee last worked on this project. Richard also noted that the current map in the brochure should be corrected to remove the old section of trail near Charlie's bridge. Debra Huffman said that she will correct the map.

Roland Roberge stated that he will soon need new brochures. Debra stated that she will correct the map and give him a new master copy. Roland will then contact Tim Tenhave to have the brochures produced.

Peter Mikolajczuk stated that there is a website that tracks GPS signals, and you can see which trails are being used most often.

Amanda Yonkin stated that a large tree fell over near the gate at Gerard Drive. She contacted Newt, who examined it and determined that it was too dangerous to be taken down without proper equipment. He contacted PWD and they removed it.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.