

North Yarmouth Parks & Recreation Committee
Summary of Community Forum – January 14, 2015, 7 PM

Members in attendance: Dave Holman, Brian Sites, Rick Smart.

Others present: Approximately 30 members of the community and various interest groups.

We invited interested members of the community to join us for a presentation of the ideas the Parks & Recreation Committee has been formulating. The event was well attended with approximately 35 people present. Representatives from many different interested parties were in attendance, including: snowmobile clubs, birding, political, conservation, hunters, and others.

The forum started with Dave Holman providing a summary of our 100 year plan. The plan was generally very well received and people were excited it was in place. Audience comments included:

- General concern that all groups need to be represented and their use of town land should be respected. Specific mentions included snow shoers, birders, sports teams, equestrians, and hunters.
- We should make sure we are using all available resources, including: The Bicycle Coalition of Maine, PACTS, State of Maine, etc.
- We should establish baselines for ecological impacts to the parks, including things like erosion.
- The plan should include “conserving additional land” as an explicit goal.
- The plan should include the connectivity of all assets - not just town assets.
- What can we do to involve the Yarmouth Water District? We might want to explore common uses and goals for YWD land.
- We need to make sure it’s clear what trails can be used for what purposes. For example: what trails can horses use? What trails can dogs use? (Note: horses and dogs sometimes do not get along).

The next portion of the forum had Brian Sites summarizing the “Start Here” program he has presented to a number of different groups. Audience comments included:

- We should work with Fun Day committee to promote the “Start Here” campaign.
- We should make sure we are looking at the big picture so that all the large projects go together.
- Communications are very important: Newsletters, stationery, t-shirts, etc. Everything needs to be connected and come together.
- There was a fair amount of discussion about branding and “brand guidelines.”
- We need to make sure we know who is using our assets and how all users interact with one another.

The third and final part of the forum was Alan Stearns from the Royal River Trust. Comments included:

- It would be a huge benefit if we could get a connecting trail or right-of-way between town center and Knights Pond.
- Discussion of how RRT has dealt with local landowners and some of the pitfalls associated with the process.
- Alan mentioned that it would cost “about \$1 million” to construct a flood-proof bridge over the Royal River.
- Alan also mentioned the Bradberry/Pineland trail required 15-20 years working with landowners, followed by 8 years of trail construction. Any large project requires a lot of time.
- We might want to consider reviewing the land use ordinance to improve/enhance relationships with private landowners. This could improve trail and public access.

Rick Smart
Secretary