

North Yarmouth Parks and Recreation Committee

April 4, 2023, 6:00 PM

Wescustogo Community Center

Approved minutes 5-3-23

I. Called to Order 6:00 P.M.

Present: Bob Abbott, Laurie Gilman, Scott Kerr, Steve Palmer

II. Announcements:

1. Regarding Laurie's report of honeysuckle being cut, she was informed by a North Yarmouth (NY) resident that in Old Town House Park (OTHP) honeysuckle was being cut and some tossed in the river. Laurie checked, finding cut branches on the ground but only one that might have been tossed in the river. **Scott will follow up with the Town Manager.**
2. Laurie announced that the Town Manager gave her a form from Ag Allies regarding Chandler Brook liming asking Laurie to complete it as representative of the NY Parks which she did.

III. Approval of minutes – A motion was made by Steve and seconded by Bob that both the January and February meetings be approved as presented. Approved 4 – 0.

IV. Financial report – none presented

1. **Public comment** – Scott introduced a communication from a NY resident and frequent guest at the committee, expressing his concern about the recent Army Corp of Engineers (ACE report): "I'm temporarily in a very fragile immunological place and have been advised to have my say electron regarding the ACE report. So, as a resident citizen curmudgeon, I ask that this be read into the minutes under public comment. I watched the entire zoom presentation by the Army Corp of Engineers. I hadn't realized that the been dammed to some extent for close to 350 years, which

begs the questions of what constitute responsible restoration and are the proposed "restorable" species even tenable today?

It seemed to me that the much ballyhooed DO study got short shrift from the ACE and may not this soon to be shallow stream.

It was good to see the Corps list Recreation as a concern and even better to have community included, which brings me to a request for this committee and for the town's Select Board. must have a constant vocal presence on any committee or panel or discussion involving the fate. Reading reports after the fact will not be nearly as effective. "

Sincerely,

Martin Kremer

V. New Business

1. The **"Boards and Committees Conduct Policy and Acknowledgement"** form, adopted by the Select Board, was discussed at length. Bob, Laurie and Steve said they have turned theirs in
2. Scott announced that in June 2023, Kim Merrill and Steve Palmers' term expire and that Steve will not seek to continue on the committee. ***Scott asked members to think about candidates for the vacancy.***
3. Steve raised the question the impact of bikes in the parks, preserves and trails, especially CB and the new woodland trail to the North field. All motorized vehicles (unless NY PW) are prohibited in parks and trails. Bikes are permitted, subject to the same guidelines and restricts as for foot traffic. Bob mentioned that heavy mountain bike traffic in Knight's Pond doesn't seem to have anymore impact than foot traffic.

VI. Old business and updates

1. **Developing an annual and multi-year calendar** – Scott described how we might use a spreadsheet to organize and

schedule activities for the committee. ***It was agreed that all members should send him a list of activities they want to see on the calendar and he will create the spreadsheet.***

2. **Baston park and dam removal**– There was a discussion of the recent public report given by the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) regarding the impact of removing the Royal River dams in Yarmouth. It was agreed that much more must be known for us to have a clear idea of the effect it would have on the proposed connection of the Baston pond to the river. Bob suggested we use a line and weight to create a depth map of the pond so we can answer questions that arise about what pond would look like if the river drops (say 4 feet). Scott said he's still looking for a device for a boat that might do the mapping to an exportable digital file. ***The committee feels that it is vitally important to North Yarmouth interests for the Town to be fully involved in getting relevant data and in the decision-making about the potential removal so that it.***
3. **Park ordinance update** – Laurie presented a draft set of rules proposal for Chandler Brook, intended to protect the South fields nesting grounds by keeping people and animals on pathways and out of the hay fields and for the North field to keep dogs and horses out to maintain this protected shrubland habitat. ***Laurie will continue working on the wording.*** Plans were discussed about how and where to post them when finalized.
4. **Chandler Brook map update** - Bob proposed that a statement regarding the protected status of North field be added to the map of CB that is being currently being updated. It reads "*North field is Protected Habitat, no dogs or horses allowed*". Laurie made the motion it be added, Steve seconded. Vote 4 -0. ***Bob will ask RRCT, who is updating the map to include this statement on the new version of map.***
5. **Signage and maps** – The new CB map will replace the one currently on the large kiosk as the entrance. ***Bob will build mini-kiosks for maps (8 ½" x 11")*** that will be laminated by the Town.

Initial ones will be at both trail entrances to the North field. The committee will discuss other possible locations at the next meeting.

6. **CB management plan - tree removal** – A draft proposal for removing trees in North field to maintain the scrubland nature was discussed. ***It was suggested that it be a phased in plan that removes a set number of selected trees over a 3 year period. Scott will ask Diane Barnes to ask Cark Baston to communicate with us and plan the process.*** There was discussion about when to cut to avoid cutting trees with bird nesting in them. The removal will be supervised by the committee.

CB management plan - haying – At a previous meeting Bob raised the question regarding the ***Town of NY having an obligation to fertilize the hay fields in CB.*** Scott reviewed the Conservation Easement and found that the CE allows various treatments of the fields but does not explicitly require that the fields be treated but the CE does obligate the Town to maintain the habitat. This is supported by an email from Alan Stearns (RRCT). Steve and Scott reported that the farmer who would do work on the fields for the hay does not have the equipment to do the fertilizing and liming and seemed to make no suggestion that they could help get it done. That means they have nothing to swap.

Since last year we had a very good bobolink population in the South field it which has never been fertilized since it became a Town preserve. Bob wondered if perhaps we have reached a good environmental balanced at the present regarding bedstraw but that close attention should be paid and we should be prepared to intervene if necessary to maintain this habitat for ground nesting birds.

7. **Invasives** – Regarding Laurie's report honeysuckle being cutting in OTHP the committee expressed surprise as no one on the committee was aware that honeysuckle cutting was being done. This lack of information and involvement is a concern for the committee. Scott asked that the letter below be included in the minutes:

“Invasive Plants

Hey Scott,

I have reached out to NRCS regarding funding for municipalities to control invasive plants. I don't believe they normally fund municipalities, typically farmers and forestland owners.

The last grants we applied for through the Maine Forest Service Invasive Plant Program were not funded, nor where any of the municipalities I applied for. The demand was overwhelming and the Maine Forest Service Prioritized small landowners for the funding.

I have discussed with Jan Santerre the demand for work on municipal properties and she agrees there is a great need. She is working to hopefully utilize Project Canopy for a future municipal source of funding for invasive plants. Lets hope this works out...

Let's look at the poison ivy areas this spring and develop a gameplan.

The project at Old Townhouse Park and status is unknown to me. I spent considerable time working on contracts between the municipality and the contractor, which they signed. Beyond that I never heard whether they completed the project or not. Chainsaw issues with the contractor I guess???

Anyway, I had considerable time which I never billed. I was waiting for the project completion...

Thanks,

Paul

Paul L Larrivee, Jr. LF 3306

207 Forestry Consulting Services, LLC”

8. **Financial** – It was motioned by Steve and seconded by Scott that the committee ***stop funding the placement of dog waste bag dispensers in the Town parks*** since they don't seem to be effective. Vote 4 - 0.
9. **Financial** – Port-a-potties have not be placed in the parks for the last two years with no complaints from the public, it seems. It was motioned by Bob and seconded by Steve, that ***we officially***

indicate that the committee does not support funding porta-potties in the parks going forward. Vote 4 -0.

10. **Trails** – Discussion of the Village center trail. Land between Village View I and II was officially deeded to the Town by Ben Grover in October, 2022. This 13 acres/parcel, provides direct access to Knight's Pond from village Center. Bob expressed interest in opening this new trail to the public this spring since it will provide the long awaited and much anticipated direct access to Knight's Pond from North Yarmouth.

VII. The next meeting will be at 6:00, May 3, 2023

VIII. Adjournment 8:08 P.M.

Submitted by: Bob Abbott