

North Yarmouth Parks Committee

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Wescustogo Community Center

Minutes

- I. Call to Order at 6:00pm.
 - a. Present: Elise Kern, Laurie Gilman, Marty Kremer
 - b. Absent: Bob Abbott, Kelly Barnes, Karl Cyr (SB observer)
- II. Approval of Minutes: June minutes approved 3-0. August minutes approved 3-0.
- III. Public Comment: none
- IV. New Business:
 - a. Determine new Chair or Co-chairs
 - i. Tabled due to lack of several committee members
 - b. GP COG & Subcommittee
 - i. Select Board has asked this committee to nominate 1 to 2 members to join a specialized subcommittee charged with overseeing the development of GPCOG's Plan and making a recommendation for the implementation of the Plan. Elise Kern offered to represent the Parks committee on this sub-committee.
 - c. Discuss strategy for creating a comprehensive invasives plan.
 - i. The committee discussed the invasives work previously commissioned, and the need to develop a more formal plan that documents our reasoning and strategy for dealing with invasives.
 - ii. Marty to draft a brief (paragraph) statement of strategy for our invasives management plan, to share back at the next meeting.
 - d. Plan for a grand opening for the Village Center trail that provides direct access to Knight's Pond from North Yarmouth.

- i. The trail will be started this fall by the land developer, with use likely not feasible until the spring. Tabling this topic until the trail is closer to being complete.
- e. Everyone a monitor idea – each committee member pick a park to check and report on at least once a month.
 - i. The committee discussed this concept and assigned the following general areas of responsibility:
 - 1. Elise – Sam Ristich Trail
 - 2. Bob – Knight’s Pond and Eleanor Hayes Town Forest (& Marty can help here too)
 - 3. Karl & Kelly – Old Town House Park
 - 4. Laurie – Chandler Brook
 - 5. Marty – Wescustogo
- f. Hire an environmental consultant (Dan Diffen of Sevee and Mahar) regarding a possible platform and benches at the NY end of pond.
 - i. Committee discussed the prospective location and the need to pursue getting a quote from an environmental consultant on this project to understand the feasibility of placing these assets. Committee voted and approved 3-0.
- g. Starting planning for committee report for the North Yarmouth Annual Report.
 - i. Every year, each committee must submit a report to the town. Committee agreed that this is best performed by Laurie and Bob due to the fact that the time frame covered falls under their tenure.

V. Old Business

- a. Trail work Eleanor Hayes Town Forest (EHTF). Ask Public Works for a plan
 - i. The Town Manager spoke with public works, they are willing to do the work if they can be provided with a larger plan that covers all the parks.

- ii. Committee decided that each member should visit their designated park, by September 17th, and note what clear maintenance needs are visible (list of things like fallen trees, fences falling apart, major erosion, trails needing significant cutting, missing trail markers, etc), and share with the rest of the committee via email. Bob and Laurie will compile the list and begin sharing this with Public Works ASAP so that work may begin, and review the comprehensive list with the committee at the October meeting.
- b. Implementing tree removal plan for North Field Chandler Brook.
 - i. These native white pine trees are to be removed in order to maintain a brushland habitat, with support from the state of Maine, conducive to small animals like rabbits. The committee discussed a concern expressed by a local citizen, Maria Mazzora, about the quantity of trees to be removed. These trees are to be removed in a phased, 3 year period, to minimize the impact. Public Works is to start this cutting this fall, and this committee needs to identify which specific trees should be removed in this year's cutting plan.
 - ii. See additional Memo attached at the end of these minutes for further documentation of this conversation.
 - c. Detail review of this year's budget
 - i. Tabled, Laurie will forward via email to the committee for discussion next month.
 - d. Review the Lagasse deed that gives the Town's RR bed trail access to route 231.
 - i. The committee's understanding is that the town has access to this, but the town is not able to find an official deed or document that notes this. Tabled for further discussion next month.

VI. Open Forum

- a. Elise noted she will be absent next month and someone else will need to take the minutes.
- b. Hunting season signs need to be re-installed soon, Laurie to connect with Bob about retrieving these.

VII. Suggestions for future Agenda items to be sent to chair(s) by 9/15, next meeting is October 4th at 6pm.

VIII. Adjournment – 7:01pm

MEMO – SUBMITTED BY LAURIE GILMAN

On August 28, 2023 Maria Mazzora, of 95 Farms Edge, contacted the town office to express her concern about the trees that had recently been tagged in the North Field of Chandler Brook Preserve. I spoke with Maria on August 29, 2023.

Maria is a frequent user of Chandler Brook Park as she frequently walks her dog there. Maria's concerns were based on both the size and the quantity of trees. She felt that some of the trees were big and majestic, and she felt the number of trees that were tagged was excessive.

I explained that the Parks Committee was working with the state and had voted a few years ago to maintain North Field as shrubland habitat. This habitat is becoming rare and it is good for supporting small mammals as well as insects and birds. Unfortunately, the Eastern White Pine trees, which make up the majority of trees that are currently growing in the North Field, are not part of a shrubland habitat. I informed Maria that our plan was to cut the marked trees down over a period of three years so not all the tagged trees would be cut at once.

I commended Maria for speaking up. She said appreciated the call and conversation but wanted to be sure her disappointment and concerns were documented.