

North Yarmouth Parks and Recreation Committee

September 1, 2021

Wescustogo Community Center

Present: Bob Abbott (chair), Ted Danforth, Steve Palmer, Scott Kerr, Elise Kern, Kim Merrill, Laurie Gilman. Minutes recorded by Elise Kern

I. Call to order 6:33pm

II. Minutes Approval

Past meeting minutes unanimously approved by entire board

III. New Business

1. Secretarial function

- a. Kim agreed to take notes and pass them on to Elise, who with her notes, will produce the minutes document. Elise to record minutes this session.

2. Annual Report to Town

- a. Bob has submitted Annual Report to the town today for inclusion in the town annual report, largely based on what has been done of the past year and intentions for the near future. Committee agreed that this report was an accurate and helpful depiction of the committee's recent efforts. Scott Kerr noted that he would like Annual Report to make clear that the preserves are working forests that are harvested for trees on occasion so that readers would understand appropriate uses of the land.

3. Review budget

- a. Bob distributed budget to entire committee for review.

4. Marketing of Town's Parks

- a. Committee discussed the need to publicize the park offerings in town. Consideration given to a marketing/publicity drive to encourage users of the facilities to share photos and reviews on social media or AllTrails app/site. Re: Facebook – Anne has transferred admin credentials to Elise Kern for management, committee is encouraged to share good photos of our sites with Elise to be shared on social media.

IV. Old Business

1. Ag Allies' refurbishment program

- a. Correspondence that Steve & Laurie had with Maeve (Kennebec Estuary Land Trust) was shared with the committee. Maeve was very

enthusiastic about presence of Bobolinks in Chandler Brook fields. Would like to partner with us to make Chandler Brook a demonstration sight along with Ag Allies. Ag Allies seeks to find a beneficial alliance between farmers, lifecycle of birds, and recreational use. Might have small amount of financial support, some logistical support (soil testing, guidance on harvest/fertilizer timing, signage explaining program). Has volunteered to attend Committee meetings if needed. Wants to know our interest level in partnering with them so they can plan. Steve Palmer recommends we notify them of our interest in partnering with them. Scott Kerr would like them to submit a specific proposal of what they would like to do with us (including any costs), then this proposal could be shared with Select Board and be publicized with the NY town populace. Committee thinks publicizing the presence of the Bobolinks among the town would be helpful. Committee requested they come to a future meeting and bring a proposal with them for discussion, Lauri Gilman to coordinate this.

2. Skyline report

- a. Bob sent via email to the committee the communication he received from Jen (Skyline Board of Directors). Skyline is broadly supportive of working with Yarmouth Water to use this land adjacent to their property. General maintenance of the trails near Skyline on the Yarmouth Water land would be handled by them.

3. EHTF progress

- a. Continued progress ongoing at this site. Town Maintenance team has been working on removing honeysuckles. Snowmobile trails have been smoothed out, some trails have had additional trees removed. Spur started that starts from snowmobile trail that goes along the back. Significant amount of buckthorn discovered. When leaves are down, plan to return to lay out a continuance of the path. Existing trails are very wide. Scott Kerr mentioned discussion with Clark about the installation of a gate to prevent ATV access, and a sign kiosk outlining permissible uses of the land and trails to limit destructive usage. Committee needs to clarify the acceptable uses there soon and include on signage. Laurie Gilman brought up need to have educational element about removal of invasive species. Could include before and after photos of removal and guidance to residents on how to do the same on their own properties.
- b. RE grant to support the removal of invasive species, this is still in progress, funding expected this fall.

4. RRCT management report of the NY section of Knight's Pond

- a. Report shared via email with committee. Report states that all is well in NY section of Knight's Pond. Trail is currently maintained in an informal fashion by residents. Bob expects that Committee will need to take a greater oversight role when land transfer (currently pending) abutting this park is acquired. Recently completed land sale brings this closer to reality. RRCT received a notification that they may maintain

the loop trail in an informal manner at the moment. Once town acquires full ownership, Bob believes some boardwalk work will be required in wetland sections that are too wet for regular foot traffic. Committee may also want to consider the creation of a bench area overlooking the pond.

5. Sam Ristich Nature Trail progress
 - a. Repairs are currently ongoing. Permanent steps are being created. Previous steps on steep ravine deteriorated condition, new steps to be more permanent.
6. Donations for memorials (benches in parks)
 - a. Request was made by a resident to place a bench in memorial of a dog. Group consensus is that we will not be developing a policy and are not in favor of allowing this at the park. Committee expressed concern that memorial benches with private remembrances could have negative reactions by some, would have to be controlled by the committee to ensure consistency and a look that the committee wanted and that maintenance would become the Town's responsibility. Committee would be open to a more general park support, or plaque on the park entryway signage, but no benches at this time.
7. Park Steward program
 - a. Meeting held last week to outline program. Committee has requested of the Town management to assign a dedicated email account for the Parks & Rec committee for residents to submit requests for maintenance or other commentary. Email creation is in progress. Park "Stewards" will submit any necessary notes or requests to this email, Ted to collect and analyze findings and share as appropriate. Current plans do not call for detailed record-keeping of number of cars, children, dogs, etc but program scope may change over time. Monitors (and residents) are encouraged to submit photos when contacting the parks email account.

V. Round Robin

Steve – Kite Festival cancelled because of Covid. In October, will go down to Chandler for some selective mowing. Also contacted a drone operator, and they are willing to take some drone shots so we can count white pines and other trees as desired.

Chandler – if we are going to continue to allow usage of North Field trail to pedestrians & dogs, then efforts need to be made to stabilize the trail where it washes out frequently.

Winter activities at the parks: several years ago we did a snowshoe event. Kim Merrill is interested in winter events, will develop an idea re sled dog events to share with the committee at a future meeting. Potential for a future sledding event as well.

VI. Next meeting

October 6th

VII. Adjournment 8:03pm