

# North Yarmouth Parks and Recreation Committee

May 4th 2022, at 6:30 PM at Wescustogo Community Center

## MINUTES

- I. Call to Order at 6:32pm Present: Kim Merrill, Steve Palmer, Scott Kerr, Bob Abbott, Elise Kern, Laurie Gilman. Select Board Liaison: Jim Moulton. Public: Rachel Whitmarsh
- II. Announcements - none
- III. Approval of April meeting minutes. Motion by Steve, Laurie seconds. Approved unanimously.
- IV. Public Comment
  - a. none
- V. New Business
  - a. none
- VI. Old Business
  - a. Select Board and P&R Mission, the Recreation component, etc.
    - i. Scott requested to Jim that the Select Board provide some guidance on their goals for the Committee, Jim indicated that this would come after the election this June which could drive a change in leadership.
  - b. Royal River: Trees in and across river
    - i. Steve is in possession of a drone video documenting the current state of downed trees in the river.
    - ii. Follow-Up: Committee requested Elise to post known information about downed trees (received from Jeff Brown in April) on NYPR Facebook page, and request that anyone aware of additional downed trees email the Committee.
  - c. Notices: Posting made on NYPR Facebook page about Turkey hunting season, and shared to Cumberland and North Yarmouth resident's Facebook group page.
  - d. Kiosks: Bob has requested updated quote for kiosks at EHTF and other sites. Will share updated quotes with Committee when received.
  - e. New committee member application process and recommendations for selection by Select Board. Select Board Charge to NYPR. Committee Purpose and Tasks, Job description. Skills and interests sought.
    - i. Committee discussed the application process, and what level of rigor should be required of applicants. Several committee members stated that the proposed guidance was overly burdensome and may deter applicants. Jim was supportive of the concept of people knowing what the committee does and the committee knowing more about applicants so that any recommendation to the SB would have some basis. Jim also proposed that the Committee offer ways for applicants to learn more about the Committee prior to applying for membership, potentially through project work or other ad-hoc volunteering. Laurie recommended adding more detail to the existing Town application form to gather more information. Laurie noted that all openings are listed in the weekly Town email.
    - ii. Steve made several detailed recommendations about modifications he would recommend to the Prospective Committee Member Application Guidelines, primarily that many of the elements (reading easements, reading management plans, etc) be completed if/when they are appointed to the Committee and not expected to be accomplished in advance of Committee appointment.

- iii. Follow-up: Scott will work with the Town Manager to post modified applicant process recommendations and ensure that openings are advertised.
- iv. Elise informed Committee that due to increasing personal commitments, she will not be seeking another term once her term expires in June, so there will be an additional opening at that time.
- f. Virtual meeting policy. Public hearing
  - i. Scott proposed that public hearing be scheduled for our next regular meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> to adopt existing Virtual Meeting Policy proposed by the Town. Motion proposed by Bob, seconded by Steve. Motion passed unanimously.
  - ii. Follow-Up: Scott to coordinate announcement of this posting with Town Manager.
- g. Financial: Budget and Monthly Accounting. Operating and Reserve budgets
  - i. Steve shared Parks & Rec Expense Report to the Committee, as provided by Town Manager. Current Reserve account balance is \$49,780.64. Steve has some questions about some of the account transactions and the reporting format, and he will discuss these directly with the Town Manager. This statement will be provided monthly by the town, requested to have for distribution to Committee members a week before the monthly meeting.
  - ii. Follow-up: Steve and Scott to meet with Diane and develop better understand of the format used going forward.
- h. Conservation Corp
  - i. Previous month's discussions were that this may be overly complex for the Committee's needs, and henceforth this will no longer be pursued.
- i. Animal Ordinance
  - i. Town Manager to pursue this process with the Animal Control Officer. The intention of this ordinance is to apply to the entire town, and not specifically related to the individual parks. This ordinance would simply state that the owner of a dog must have control over the animal, and does not specify the nature of the control nor any park specific leashing requirements.

## VII. ALL PARKS

- a. Picnic Tables
  - a. ordered, waiting for receipt by Clark.
  - b. Follow-Up: Steve to discuss specific placement within Baston Park and Chandler Brook with Clark
- b. Sign refurbishing, replacement and additions
  - a. Steve completed refurbishments on two signs, Clark and team reinstalling these at Westcustogo and Old Town House. Committee also questioned whether smoking is allowed in the parks and whether any signage should note smoking guidelines.
  - b. Follow-up: Scott to determine whether Town has an existing policy that allows or disallows smoking on town property, and whether this applies to the parks.
- c. Recurring items and updates
- d. History of the Parks and Forests CB
  - a. Scott sent via email a history he compiled of the Chandler Brook park.
- e. Communications: Facebook Page, Review, All Trails etc.

- a. Follow-Up: Elise to provide detailed description of these communications duties so that future Committee members will be aware of this work need once her term ends.
- f. Invasives: Work plan with Paul Larrivee, Clark Baston and Eric Grove
  - a. Plan in place for balance of 2021-2022 budget allocation. Proposal sent via email to the Committee. Waiting for contract from Eric to sign so that he can complete this work before the close of the fiscal year.
- g. Trail Work
  - a. Bob noted that updated signs have been placed at Chandler Brook noting the previously-discussed trail closure in the North Field.
  - b. Follow-Up: Scott to share easement for Chandler Brook to see whether there is space to increase parking area due to heavy use.
- h. Trail Maps on Website
  - a. Elise completed review of aspects on the Committee webpage that should be updated, including updated maps. Will share with the Committee via email for confirmation, then submit to the Town Manager for execution.
- i. Dog waste, bags, and receptacles
  - a. No update
- j. Brown Tail Moths
  - a. No spraying to be conducted at any of the town parks.

#### VIII. Baston Park (BP)

- a. Yarmouth Dam Removal. Water Depth. DEP application process
  - a. Scott forwarded email communication with Yarmouth town about this process, they will share additional updates as they are available.
  - b. Scott discussed concern that dam removal may sufficiently lower river levels to reduce recreational value of the Royal River. Unsure at this time what the effect will be.

#### IX. Chandler Brook (CB)

- a. South Field. Ag Allies Presentation and Contract
  - a. No specific updates from Maeve. The grasses are beginning to grow, but the Bobolinks have not yet returned for nesting.
  - b. Follow-up: Laurie to connect with Maeve about upcoming tasks and timeline.
- b. North Field. Field and habitat maintenance. Inspection with Joe Anderson. Newsletter article. Management Plan
  - a. Scott and Steve to continue drafting of the plan.
- c. Trail Closure and sign
  - a. Closure in place, no current evidence of any disregard for the closure.
- d. Management Plan, Recreation Management Plan
  - a. The Conservation Easement notes that any behaviors allowed in a Recreation Management Plan must be consistent with the Easement. Scott sent via email his accumulated references to “recreation” in the conservation easement. There are many inconsistencies in this document, some including the permitted hours of operation.
- e. BPL/RRCT MOU
  - a. Drafted about 10 years ago, this Memorandum of Understanding document notes which tasks are allocated to each party in the easement, including North Yarmouth, the Bureau of Public Lands, and the Royal River Conservation Trust. The

Committee discussed whether this document accurately reflects the right responsibilities with the correct parties. Bob recommends that we bring all three parties together in person at the contested areas in the park to drive agreement on path forward. Steve requested additional support to complete the remaining items in the Management Plan (maps, GPS coordinates, etc). Committee agreed that document should be finalized in time for the next Committee meeting so that it can be formally voted on.

- b. Follow-Up: Steve and Scott to inform Select Board in advance of white pines needed to be removed in the North Field. Jim to discuss current backlog with Clark to see when this can be accomplished.

X. Eleanor Hayes Town Forest (EHTF)

- a. Invasives – waiting on the Forest Service grant
- b. Land Survey – Scott spoke with Wayne last week, awaiting documents from him.
- c. Trails that were roughed-out last year will need to be maintained this year to deter regrowth. This may require another moderate sized excavator.
- d. Follow-Up: Scott to follow up with Clark about timing, and potential coordination with Paul’s invasives management.

XI. Old Townhouse Park (OTHP)

- a. Removal of Dead Trees - complete
- b. Management of site of OTH
  - a. Location of former Old Town House building. Public Works will smooth this land and ensure it is a grass field. No additional plans for this location at this time.
- c. Invasives Proposal – approved via email by Fish and Wildlife. Scott to draft more formal doc for Fish and Wildlife to approve to supplement email thread that approved this plan.

XII. Wescustogo

- a. PWD sludge spreading – Town Manager (not Committee) to inform residents about this finding. Jim indicated that he is connecting with additional parties (Water, DEP, etc) to ensure they are in agreement as to the severity of the potential contamination, and what activities can still be safely accomplished there. Once this is accomplished, public notification will be made. Nature of the public communication (signs, etc) still to be determined, but it will be authored directly by the Town.

XIII. Sam Ristich Trail

- a. Natural History and Trail education. Bob will be meeting with Ginny Van Dyke to review a section of the trail that would be well suited to add a story walk to this section of the trail. In partnership with the Living Well Committee.

XIV. Knight’s Pond

- a. At Town meeting, the residents in attendance voted to accept Ben’s grant of the open space in Village Center Estates Phase 2 which includes the area for a trail from Village View Lane to land owned by Matt and Sharon Grover that NY has an easement to cross to get to the CMP power line and to land that NY acquired from the RRCT that fronts on Knights Pond.
- b. Site planning documents indicate that Ben Grover will complete the parking area that allows access to Knight’s Pond.
- c. Committee recommends that Bob be appointed to the Joint Committee (with Cumberland) that manages this preserve, so that the Committee has some level of visibility, but that overall management for this land remain with the Joint Committee.

- d. At this stage, this section of land is not officially under the purview of the Committee, as Committee park oversight is specifically assigned by the Select Board.
- e. Signage created on this trail should be consistent with the existing material on the Cumberland side.

- XV. Communications Channels Status Report – no update
- XVI. Town Newsletter Next Issue
- XVII. Round Robbin
- XVIII. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 1, 2022
- XIX. Future Agenda Items - Next Meeting and Subsequent meetings
  - a. Baston Park and DEP's request to be discussed at the next meeting.
- XX. Adjournment at 8:43pm