

North Yarmouth Parks and Recreation Committee

November 3, 2021, Wescustogo Community Center

Present: Bob Abbott (chair), Steve Palmer, Scott Kerr, Elise Kern, Kim Merrill, Laurie Gilman.

I. Call to order 6:32pm

II. Announcements

- Bob informed the committee that member Ted Danforth has resigned from the committee, he is thanked for his efforts and hard work on the behalf of the committee.
- Baston Park is currently closed due to muddy conditions. Expected to reopen in a few days. There is a bar in place to prevent parking and indicate closure, and signage is present.
- Request from Lisa Thompson to give a presentation at NYPR December meeting, she is currently working on a grant application for outdoor recreation at Westcustogo (which would include playground equipment, etc). Lisa would like the Parks & Rec committee to be involved as the project may include usage/modification of the Sam Ristich trail. Request approved, will be on December agenda.
- Joint Committee with Cumberland for Parks & Rec management is launching a stewardship group, and has invited Bob to be present for initial launch of the group. Bob to attend and report back.

III. Minutes Approval

Motion to accept minutes as written. Committee discussed whether minutes should be more detailed to reflect more of the depth of the AgAllies discussion. Motion passes 5-1 (Scott Kerr opposes).

IV. New Business

1. Kiosks for EHTF and Baston Park
 - a. Committee is in receipt of a proposal from Jonathan for the creation of a kiosk at EHTF. Cost is about \$600 with installation, Steve recommends, if we pursue this, to see whether the town can handle installation to minimize costs. Steve does not recommend installation at Baston Park at this stage.
Scott recommended getting a quote for kiosk that is consistent with size at other locations vs smaller size indicated in the aforementioned

quote. While existing larger size kiosks currently have blank space, having a larger kiosk would allow for more educational and reference material space. Would also recommend the inclusion of detailed maps (of the individual location and location of other NY preserves as well). Committee discussed the current state of repair of the kiosk at Chandler Brook and recommended pursuing a quote for the resurface of the outward facing portion of that kiosk, as well as both sides of the Old Town House kiosk. Bob recommends using cedar for resurfacing. Committee to pursue a quote with Jonathan for some options (1 for Eleanor Hayes parking area on Route 9, and refurbishing of 1 surface at Chandler Brook). Committee discussed and agreed that consistency should be applied for future locations but no need to retrofit existing locations like Wescustogo that may have smaller kiosks. Committee discussed placement of a simpler map at the parking location and trail entrance area where the Sam Ristich trail enters the Eleanor Hayes Town Forest.

2. Winterkids program

Lisa Thompson sent an email about Winterkids (an organization that promotes outdoor learning for school aged children in Maine) and their interest in offering a snowshoe lending program. NYPR would potentially be a sponsor of such an initiative. Committee to gather more information and discuss in more detail at the next meeting.

3. Articles for Town Newsletter

Committee discussed via email the opportunity to author articles in the North Yarmouth newsletter. Committee agreed widely that the creation of informational articles would be valuable, and agreed to write some content. Bob recommends the first article be on the topic of hunting and its presence in the parks.

Other potential topics proposed:

- Hunting in parks and it's enshrinement in the original deeds
- History of each park
- The potential boat launch at Baston Park
- Ag Allies and their proposal/interest in Chandler Brook
- Invasive plants in parks and how to mitigate

Kim and Scott to separately work on articles (Kim – Chandler Brook history, Scott – Hunting). Recommended length of 3 or 4 paragraphs.

V. Old Business

1. Chandler Brook trail repair update

- a. Some committee members spoke with Jonathan about preservation of an eroded trail at Chandler Brook. Committee in receipt via email today of recommendation for repair, cost approximately \$2800. Committee discussed and agreed upon a preferred alternative of closing that section of trail as detailed below in section 2b.

2. Chandler Brook North Field progress
 - a. Steve sent via email a comprehensive report about his findings, partially based on drone photography. Steve believes the white pines present should be curtailed as they are becoming over-dominant for intended shrubland habitat. While white pines are native, the goal is to create a shrubland habitat for birds, rabbits, foxes, etc and overdominance of this tree is problematic..
 - b. Committee discussed whether the eroding hill trail (currently temporarily closed) should be completely and permanently closed by placing logs across the path. Access to north field would be restricted to going down and coming back up the same trail near the barn. A deliberate reduction in traffic via this approach would be beneficial for the intention of bolstering the shrubland habitat. Placement of logs on the trail could be removed in the future if desired.
 - c. Motion was made to close the upper south end of the north field hill trail using fallen tree material for the purpose of meeting the goal of protecting the shrubland habitat area and reducing erosion issues previously discussed. Note that existing maps will need to be updated to indicate closure. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Monitoring program report
 - a. Some reports have been submitted, one fallen tree at Old Town House which was removed. Some reports at Knight's Pond which have also been taken care of. Committee would like to see more frequent reports via email of park monitors, even if there are no issues to report as this will be a good historical record.
4. Baston Park report
 - a. Progress of wetlands study: Eric Lima recently indicated he will have a report by Thanksgiving on his findings.
5. Blue and yellow preserve signage report (large signs at preserve entrances)
 - a. One taken for refurbishment, and waiting on a pricing estimate for new signage. The sign in the worst condition is Chandler Brook's (flaking paint, water damage, etc). More detail to follow as pricing estimates come in.

VI. Round Robin

- a. Bob discussion on budget. Two parts – the line items, and then the reserves. Line item funds expire at the closure of each budget year. Committee discussed the need for education among the entire stakeholder community that some investment may need to be made to turn lands a within the last 20 years into more permanently viable public park lands as usage (and consequently wear) increases. In addition, NYP&R has \$5500 from TIFF funds for picnic tables and benches.
- b. Scott: in receipt of a draft from Paul Lauribe about invasive management proposal, which was shared with the committee via email. Scott requested the rest of the committee review and share any feedback with Scott for collation back to Paul.

- c. Steve: Regarding the open committee vacated by Ted Danforth's resignation, Brian Sites requested we design a process to select and present a candidate for the SB's approval. Committee may impose qualifications (like having visited all NY parks, etc) and then bring preferred candidates for approval to the SB instead of having all interested candidates interviewed live during a Select Board meeting. Propose this is an agenda item for the December meeting.
- d. Ag Allies presentation: Laurie, Maeve and Steve are working on a powerpoint presentation, scheduled for November 16th. Laurie and Steve to present, Maeve to be present to support as needed.

VII. Next meeting: *December 1, 2021*

VIII. Adjournment 8:52pm