



**Woods Committee Minutes
Monday, August 31, 2020 - 7:30 PM
ZOOM Meeting**

Approved: October 5, 2020

Attendance: Pat Klein, Joan Mahaffey, Dave Cosson, Larry French, Tom Land, Joli McCathran, Deb Mehlferber, Meghan O'Connell, Virginia Quesada, and Krista Zanetti, Bob Booher (guest)

The August 2020 Woods Committee meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM. A quorum was present.

The August WC Agenda was approved unanimously (Virginia 1st/Tom 2nd).

The July 2020 meeting minutes were approved unanimously (Joan 1st/Virginia 2nd).

Public Appearances

Bob Booher, the HPC Chairman, explained the need for coordination in developing policies on search and removal of archeological and cultural artifacts and maintenance of the natural condition of the Woods, given the HPC's expertise and the Woods description as a "defining element" in the Town's historic designation. Further, the woods policies are a significant input into the sustainability section of the Town Master Plan revisions underway.

WC members discussed the desirability of Woods policies which are carbon neutral. Native plant and animal material should be left in the Woods with a few exceptions. Wood chips which may be imported to preserve and mark trails, come from Washington Grove trees whenever possible. Fallen wood is left in the Woods unless it presents a health or safety hazard, such as a fire danger.

BHFFMD East Woods Site Visit

Joan and Pat met with Scott from BHFFMD for a tour of the East Woods. The archers will again set up stands in both the East and West Woods. Locations in the East Woods may be more flexible than last year. This year BHFFMD may use parking along the gravel portion of Ridge Road as well as the McCauley parking. The WC will alert the two families along this portion of Ridge Road of possible BHFFMD short-term parking near dawn and dusk.

Final WC Tree Policy for the East and West Woods

Pat presented the final WC Tree Policy for the East and West Woods, which was approved at the August 3rd meeting.

Update - Work in East and West Woods

IPC has sprayed both trail edges and some off-trail locations to control non-native invasive species, specifically stilt grass and mile-a-minute.

East/West Woods Trail Maintenance Priority Projects

Ordinance

Dave presented a draft Ordinance for preserving the Forest Preserve. Rules to be included on signs could include requests to stay on marked trails, prohibit bike riding and removal of cultural or archeological artifacts. To create authority for such prohibitions, a draft ordinance was discussed. It will be coordinated with the HPC, which meets later in the month and will be brought to the Council for introduction at the October meeting. Dave will follow up with Charlie on wording for the Ordinance Article 1, Section 15, 16, and 17. Please send suggestions to Dave by the week of September 10.

Signage

Krista is working with sign companies in connection with work on another committee. She will share her information with the Woods Committee. The purpose of signage is forest preservation within our forest restoration area. Where possible, signs should use graphics rather than words, for example stay on trails, dogs on leash, no bikes. The Woods Committee should check with the Town Sign Restoration volunteers to see how they constructed their award-winning signs. Mike Schank did the routing for the Town signs. A group of volunteers did the painting. Meghan volunteered to help with painting or stenciling.

Traversing Wet Trail Areas

There was a discussion of wet trail areas on the list of "Potential Projects for Trail Maintenance." The alternative Cherry Avenue Trail between Franklin and the bridge needs to be reassessed. The seep along the Maple Avenue Trail between Center and Franklin might be covered with just enough brown gravel to make it passable. There was a suggestion that a core sample be done with ground penetrating radar to determine if gravel would successfully solve the problem. Joli volunteered to investigate. Boardwalks might make passable a continuously wet area of the Challstrom Trail. We need to measure how long a boardwalk we might need. Boardwalks could be built off site and joined and anchored on the trail. Some reconfiguration of the slope down the trail from McCauley St. is planned for late Fall to reduce trail erosion and make the trail more passable after rainstorms. The project could begin this fall when vegetation has died back. We could start by clearing fallen wood debris along the southern edge of the trail. Contouring could follow with water bars and a different sheet flow from the culvert to keep water on the northern edge of the trail. Krista volunteered to distribute to WC members an updated priority list.

Larry suggested that the WC prepare a survey of Town residents on incentives for using the Woods and opinions for administering forest preservation. Krista volunteered to help. There was a discussion of the need for more community support for forest preservation and trail maintenance. Families might be willing to sponsor upkeep of specific trails. SSL hours could be

granted for trail maintenance. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops might be willing to sponsor trail maintenance projects.

Discussion of naming the ??? Trail between the bridge and Ridge Road was postponed until the next meeting. Suggestions will again be solicited in the Town Bulletin.

Final Updates, Comments, and Action Items for October Meeting

Action Items:

- Submit suggestion for draft ordinance to Dave by 9/10.
- Notify Ridge Road neighbors of BHFFMD parking.
- Reassess alternate Cherry Avenue Trail.
- Investigate obtaining a core sample along Maple Avenue.
- Prepare a survey of Town residents concerning trail use.
- Solicit again for names for the ???Trail between the bridge and Ridge Road.

Next meeting: October 5, 2020

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm (Pat 1st/Joli 2nd).

Respectfully submitted: Patrice Klein and Joan Mahaffey, Woods Committee Co-chairs