



**Woods Committee Minutes**  
**Monday, February 1, 2021 - 7:30 PM**  
**ZOOM Meeting**

Approved: March 1, 2021

Attendance: Pat Klein, Joan Mahaffey, Dave Cosson, Larry French, Joli McCathran, Deb Mehlferber, Virginia Quesada, Krista Zanetti, and guest Bob Booher

The February 2021 Woods Committee meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

The February WC Agenda was unanimously approved (Joan 1<sup>st</sup>/Virginia 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Approval of Minutes

The January 4, 2021 WC were unanimously approved with the addition of Virginia's first name to the attendance list that was inadvertently omitted (Virginia 1<sup>st</sup>/Larry 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Public Appearances

There were no public appearances.

Deer Bow Hunt Update

The 2020-21 bow hunting season ended January 30<sup>th</sup> with the BHFFMD reporting one doe taken in January for a total of 6 deer in the season, 1 buck and 5 does. Sightings on BHFFMD trail cameras and anecdotal reports suggest that the total deer population may be down. There was discussion about whether the hunters should move their stand to adjust to changing deer movement patterns. The BHFFMD will be invited to our next virtual meeting to discuss last season's experience and the upcoming 2021-22 season. A letter of appreciation will also be drafted by the Woods Committee and sent by the Mayor in recognition of the group's efforts over the last two seasons. The WC will prepare to present next year's Deer Management Plan to the Town Council in July. The WC will reimburse BHFFMD for a trail camera stolen from the East Woods.

Woods Preserve and Other Town Land Ordinance (2020-13) and Resolution Update

The draft Resolution implementing Ordinance 2020-13 and a model permit application instruction sheet were discussed. The Resolution was not considered at the last Town Council meeting to provide HPC opportunity for comment. Revisions included making terminology consistent and clarifying that the permit requirement does not apply to picking up trash. The

current proposed Resolution reflects the HPC’s input and will be introduced at the next TC meeting. After the Mayor has reviewed instructions for permit applications directed to archeological excavations, drafts with respect to fossils and minerals will be prepared. Separately, proposed application fees and associated Ordinance text are being prepared

Draft Town Comprehensive Plan (Section 13.3.3 – Sustainability)

The Committee reviewed the draft Sustainability Section 13.3.3 of the Comprehensive Plan (Town Natural Resources) and noted that trees are an important natural resource, and that maintenance of the forest preserve remains of utmost importance. Joan will revise this section of the Comprehensive plan to reflect the advantages of carbon sequestration by our Forest Preserves and to include information in the WC Mission Statement and resulting Actions. She will submit the revision to the Plan Workgroup.

Proposed FY2022 Woods Committee Budget

The Committee approved a proposed budget that retains the \$50,000.00 total from the current fiscal year but reallocates funds among some categories to reflect an expected increased need for tree work and trail maintenance.

<b>Woods Management</b>	<b>Adopted FY2021</b>	<b>Proposed FY2022</b>
Invasive Plant Control East Woods	15,000	10,000
Invasive Plant Control West Woods	5,000	10,000
Public Safety Tree Pruning/Removal	5,000	10,000
Tree Planting	10,000	5,000
Community Outreach	1,000	1,000
Whetstone Spring Restoration	1,000	1,000
Deer Management	10,000	3,000
Trail Maintenance	<u>3,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>

East/West Woods Trail Maintenance Priority Projects

The WC thanked Tom Land for marking trails with yellow blazes in anticipation of leaf fall and snow coverage during the winter months. Patty has invited Bill Bond to revisit our Woods for a follow-up later this spring.

## **Signage**

Discussions with a potential sign supplier have continued and mock-ups and prices are expected this month. The initial focus will be on signs and small kiosks at trail entry points, with interior signs to follow. The desirability of matching sign color to the Town's wooden street signs was recognized. However, because the signposts will be pressure treated, their compatibility with the appropriate paint will need to be examined.

## **Timber Turnpikes for Wet Trail Areas**

The Committee approved a proposal from a landscape contractor to construct Timber Turnpikes in three wet portions of the East Woods trails using downed tree limbs for side rails and soil available from Town Maintenance. The three areas are along the dip in the McCauley Trail, along the Franklin Trail east of Cherry, and just north of the bridge on the Cherry/Dogwood Trail. Plastic drainpipes would be used to channel rainwater under the Turnpikes. These will be pilot installations and would be evaluated for use in other wet trail areas of the Woods. The cost will be mostly labor. Separately, a section of Maple Avenue Extended that is habitually wet would be covered with approximately 6 tons of brown chipping stone, the cost for which will be mostly for the stone. Funds in the Committee's budget for deer management would be repurposed for these jobs.

## **Tree Removal**

A landscaper often used by the Town will soon begin work on removing several dead or dying trees that are a clear danger to trail users. Most trees are along the Challstom Trail.

## **West Woods Spring Clean-Up, Drainage, and Camp Fire Threats**

There are reports of several campfire sites in the West Woods along our Saybrooke border. There have also been instances of landscapers dumping debris in the East Woods. Hikers should be alert to evidence of such abuse and report it to the Town Office and the WC Chairs. The WC will ask the Mayor to make a report to the County Police liaison about the campfires. The Saybrooke HOA is interested in repairing the blocked culvert which connects the West Woods and Kelley Park. We will continue contact with the Saybrooke HOA President and with Gaithersburg City officials to resolve this issue. Spring trash clean-up in the West Woods will be planned to function consistent with social distancing and other health rules. WC chairs will assign volunteers to specific sites to clean up on their own schedules.

## **Final Updates, Comments, and Action Items for March 1, 2021 Meeting**

- Verify debriefing date with Scott of BHFFMD.
- Draft letter of appreciation to the BHFFMD for Mayor's signature.
- Present to the TC the Resolution 2021-03 to accompany Ordinance 2020-13.

- Submit revision of the Sustainability Section 13.3.3 of the Comprehensive Plan to the CP Workgroup.
- Continue investigation into Woods signage.
- Include information about campfires and dumping of landscape materials in the March Bulletin and ask the Mayor to report these incidents to our County Police liaison.
- Plan socially distanced clean-up in the West Woods.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted: Pat Klein and Joan Mahaffey, Co-chairs

Next meeting: March 1, 2021.