



Woods Committee Minutes
Tuesday, September 7, 2021 - 7:30 PM
ZOOM Meeting

Approved: October 4, 2021

Attendance: Pat Klein, Joan Mahaffey, Dave Cosson, Joli McCathran, Deb Mehlferber, Virginia Quesada, and Krista Zanetti

Excused: Meghan, Tom, Larry

Call to Order:

The September 2021 Woods Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda:

There was a motion to include a discussion of a Woods Committee response to the Shared Use Bike Path. The motion carried and the item was added at the end of the agenda. The amended September 7th WC Agenda was unanimously approved (Deb 1st/Krista 2nd).

Approval of Minutes: The August 2, 2021, WC Minutes were unanimously approved (Virginia 1st/Joli 2nd).

Public Appearances: There were no public appearances.

Woods Trail Maintenance Projects

Draft Resolution 'Woods Use Rules'

The WC reviewed in detail and then agreed on a draft resolution that would establish 13 rules for The Woods. There was discussion of the use of bikes on Woods trails. Montgomery County and the National Park Service limit bike use on some of their trails, such as the Goldmine Trail. Montgomery County closes trails after a rain and uses a Rain Out Line to inform residents of which trails are closed. MC prohibits bikes in wetlands and constructs bike trails along higher routes. Trails in the WG Woods would have to be reworked for environmental and safety reasons to accommodate bikes. There was also a discussion of "No Smoking" in the Woods.

Absent objection, the Committee recommended that the Town Council adopt the proposed “Resolution Establishing Rules for the Uses of the East and West Woods Preserves”. Upon adoption of the Resolution by the Town Council, the Committee will proceed with the acquisition and installation of the trail signage discussed last month. The Draft Resolution cites Ordinance 2021-13 (Art. I, Sec. 14) as authority for adoption of rules and establishing the objective of preservation of The Woods to ensure a natural habitat and to provide sanctuary for residents to walk. The WC will consult with the HPC about the aesthetic appearance of proposed Trail Signage at the entrances to our Woods.

Re-routed Bradfield Crossing

Town Maintenance has installed anchors for the culvert placed in the stream bed over which the re-routed trail will ultimately go. The WC will plan a fall workday to complete work on the new crossing. Additional work includes placing dirt and some stones over the culvert to stabilize the tube, possible installation of stone steps down to the stream crossing, removing a dead tree which is lying in the creek bed, and clearing the stubs of the greenbrier that has been cut for the new trail. Work will be coordinated with Steve. Soil is available at the Maintenance Garage. Some soil may be available on site. The workday will be publicized in a future Town Bulletin. Upon completion the re-routed trail will provide much safer access to and from the Challstrom trail.

Timber Turnpikes Future Plans

Consistent with the need to manage The Woods, planning continued for extension of the Timber Turnpikes to the habitually wet and muddy areas of Maple Ave Extended between the creek crossing and McCauley trails to provide a safe walking route for residents and reduce off trail walking that widens the trail and compacts the soil. WC members will mark areas where water crosses the trail and where water tends to settle on the trail. As much as possible, rails for the turnpikes will utilize fallen branches from the woods and will protect vernal pools. Upon completion of the Bradfield Crossing improvements, the wet areas of the McCauley Trail will be addressed. Town Maintenance has been requested to have soil and wood chips available. The landscape contractor who built the initial turnpikes, will be asked to complete the work in late fall/early winter when his crews are otherwise idle.

Update - WG Deer Management Program – Fall 2020/Winter 2021 Bow Hunt

The TC last month approved the Committee’s recommendation for the BHFFMD bow hunt again this season, from September 10, 2021 through January 31, 2022. Scott Rhinehart (BHFFMD) will be our primary bow hunter. The feeding station was installed in its prior location. Scott was reluctant to move it closer to the Center Street residential homes because of increased visibility and pedestrian use of the trails in the area. Discussions with MCP&P will

be initiated soon with respect to whether the hunt can be extended into the Conservation Meadow in future years.

West Woods Identify Fencing and WG Welcome Sign (Day Lily Lane/WGL)

Town Maintenance has cleared an area in the West Woods at the Day Lily/Washington Grove Lane intersection to allow for installation of the welcome sign and identify fencing designed by the Border Committee. WC members reviewed the site and recommended locations. Under consideration by the WC and the Border Committee is planting of flowering understory trees behind the welcome sign.

Comment to Shared Use Path Task Force

The Committee considered what appropriate input it should provide to the Task Force. The consensus was that the WC should ask that the Task Force to recognize (a) that the routes under consideration include an area that the County previously designated for afforestation, (b) that there are wetlands in much of the area between Crabbs Branch and the Town border, and (c) that it is important to maintain a “green buffer” on the Town borders. There were also questions of how the Town proposes to restrict access if the bike path connection produces more negative effects than anticipated. The discussion included some Montgomery County background on bike trails through residential areas. There are some trails, such as the Bethesda Trolley Trail (<https://www.traillink.com/trail/bethesda-trolley-trail/>), the Millennium Trail (<https://www.traillink.com/trail/carl-henn-millennium-trail/>), and Aspen Hill Road trail (<https://www.traillink.com/city/aspen-hill-md-trails/>) which go through neighborhoods as dedicated paved shared use paths separated from the vehicular roadway. There was a question about use of bikes on avenues with “Walk Way Only” signs.

Final Updates, Announcements, Comments, and Action Items

- Present a Resolution for Woods Etiquette to the Town Council on September 13.
- Submit design for trail entrance posts to the HPC for approval.
- Begin to prepare for a fall workday to complete access to the new Bradfield Crossing.
- Mark areas along Maple Avenue Extended where turnpikes will be needed to solve problems water crosses the trail and where water stands on the trail.
- Continue working with the Border Committee on installation and landscaping of the Welcome Sign at Day Lily Land and Washington Grove Lane.
- Prepare a statement from the Woods Committee to the Shared Use Path Task Force.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM (Virginia 1st/Krista 2nd).

Next meeting will be Monday, October 4, at 7:30 PM.

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