



## **Woods Committee Minutes Monday October 4, 2021 - 7:30 PM**

**Approved:** November 1, 2021

**Attendance:** Pat Klein, Joan Mahaffey, Dave Cosson, Tom Land, Joli McCathran, Deb Mehlferber, Meghan O'Connell, Virginia Quesada and Barbara Raimondo guest

### **Call to Order**

The October 2021 Woods Committee meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM. A quorum was present.

### **Approval of Agenda:**

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

### **Approval of Minutes:**

The October 4, 2021, WC Minutes were unanimously approved with a clarification that the Goldmine Trail is a National Park Service trail (Virginia 1<sup>st</sup>/Joli 2<sup>nd</sup>).

**Public Appearances:** There were no public appearances.

### **Update - WG Deer Management Program**

Since the 2021-22 Deer Management Program began on September 10, one doe has been harvested in the East Woods on September 22.

### **Woods Trail Maintenance Projects**

#### *Update on Draft Resolution "Woods Use Rules"*

Following discussion at the September Town Council Meeting, the WC decided to reexamine its proposed Resolution on trail use and etiquette rules to consider whether targeted construction, re-routing, and differential use of certain trails would result in better trail maintenance and trail use compliance. A request for residents' comments would be posted in the October Town Bulletin. The WC will review comments received to better understand how town residents view

and value the uses of the Woods trails. One WC member had witnessed bicyclists riding through the East Woods off-trail and some dog walkers failing to remove their dogs' feces defecated in the Woods. The WC plans to discuss how/to whom to report problems, what right of way priorities should be established on trails used by both bicyclists and walkers, and communications with neighboring communities. In consultation with Mayor Compton, the WC decided to postpone action on this item until January so that there is no confusion with the work of the Shared Use Path Task Force.

#### *Accurate Mapping East and West Woods Trail*

The need for more accurate mapping includes superimposing the location of wetlands on the maps. There is an app, "Map My Run", which might be useful in reworking the Woods maps. Maps might also identify "multi use paths" and "hiking only" trails. Barbara and Dave volunteered to help. In response to a request from two residents, there was discussion of blazing a new trail into the West Woods from Daylily Lane to connect with the Poplar Trail. The Committee will examine the best location for a trail to allow Daylily Lane residents to access the West Woods and Maple Lake without having to cross and recross Washington Grove Lane.

#### *Consultation with HPC on Sign Design*

The WC solicited input from the Historic Preservation Commission on the proposed use of signposts like the one on the Shady Grove Crossing entrance to the Conservation Meadow. The HPC indicated agreement with the approach. The HPC prefers the white lettering and icons, made from Color Core, rather than metal ones. The HPC also said that 6x6 pressure treated posts painted dark brown would be in keeping with street and road signs in Town.

#### *Scheduling Fall Workday to Complete Re-routing Bradford Crossing*

Thursday, November 11, from 9:30 AM to noon was selected as the day for volunteers to help with the rerouting of the Bradford Crossing. Town Maintenance will be asked to move soil for covering the recently placed culvert as close as possible. Other tasks will include clearing green briar on the trail, stabilizing the culvert, cutting a downed tree lying in the stream bed, establishing the new trail and closing the existing one. Joli commented that there are still plans to extend a trail to the champion Blackjack Oak on the eastern edge of the woods near the crossing.

#### *Timber Turnpikes Future Plans*

Committee co-chairs and Town Maintenance conducted a walkthrough of a portion of the East Woods with a Montgomery County Parks trail expert to gain information on criteria used by the County in constructing and regulating use of trails. One key point mentioned was MC Parks does not construct trails in wetlands. For our Woods trails, suggestions included closing

existing trails in the wetland areas and re-routing those trail sections to drier areas; permitting shared walker and bicyclist use on appropriate trails, but not on others; and constructing certain trail sections using the “fill and tilt” approach to promote natural drainage. The WC plans to examine these and other ideas and report back to the Council this winter.

### **Woods Committee Input to Shared Use Path Task Force**

The WC considered relevant input to the Shared Use Path Task Force which will center on maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Joan will submit input from the WC to the Task Force based on Committee discussions at the September meeting. An excerpt from the September minutes is included below.

“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.”

### **West Woods Storm Water Management - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding Proposal**

In the light of Mayor Compton’s notice that funds (\$450,000) were available for certain uses if completed by 2024, the Committee determined to review prior efforts to control erosion in the West Woods and investigate opportunities under the American Rescue Plan including application of the federal Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act. The WC should work in cooperation with Gaithersburg and the County.

### **Final Updates, Announcements, Comments, and Action Items**

- Gather input for trail use and etiquette.
- Map data points for Woods Trail maps including an overlay of wetlands.
- Investigate new trail from Daylily Lane to the Popular Trail in the West Woods.
- Organize and publicize Fall Workday on Thursday, November 11, from 9:30 am to noon at Bradfield Crossing.
- Collect data we have on stormwater management.
- Investigate opportunities under the American Rescue Plan and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM (Joan 1<sup>st</sup>/Virginia 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Next meeting will be Monday, November 1, at 7:30 PM.

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