

Conservation Commission Trails Subcommittee Meeting

March 13, 2024

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 41 Green St

Present: Fran Philippe (Chair), Ron Klemarczyk (Consultant City Forester), Gail Page, Mark Cheever, Rebecca Ross, Anne Marie Skinner (Acting City Planner)

Absent: Aaron Monier (Secretary), Rik van Riel

Guests: Jim Owers, Andrew Gould, Matt Bowser, Nick Holmes

1. Meeting called to order at 5:20 p.m.
2. Minutes – Approval February 14, 2024 meeting minutes
 - a. Gail Page made a motion, Rebecca Ross seconded. Unanimous vote
3. New Trail Proposal Updates
 - a. NEMBA – new Broken Ground trail (Matt Bowser)
 - i. Matt apologized for volunteer management of piled up brush. Noted that they could remedy that issue. No intention of the corridor being like that.
 1. Ron noted that it will disappear; recommended to Matt/NEMBA to just flatten it down right near the trail where there is visual impact.
 - ii. Regarding how mountain bike trail flagging was done, Matt noted intention to consider conservation, sustainable trail design, and creating an interesting path. Trail path may divert from original flagged route as better trail routes identified (staying away from marshy areas) or to incorporate short switchbacks.
 1. Ron Klemarczyk expressed a concern that the original flagged route did not match the new route as ground tested by Matt. Additional concern as far as managed timberland the actual timber base is decreasing because Ron leaves buffer zones on trails, or skidder trails to prime areas turn into hiking trails, or invasives.
 - a. Matt notes that he will not put a trail in a wetland; won't disturb wetland habitat.
 - b. Also changes proposed/real to consider for slope risks.
 - iii. Fran Philippe asked about the corridor. Matt Bowser noted that the trail would stay within the existing corridor.
 - iv. Ron requested that he be made aware if the trail goes more than 50 feet outside of the proposed trail. Chair Philippe noted it would be helpful to get a final walk of the trail.
 1. Mark Cheever motioned for Ron to be advised if the trail goes more than 50 feet outside the corridor of the proposed trail, and requested a final walk through to evaluate and affirm trail location within proper bounds of initial route; seconded by Rebecca Ross and the motion passed unanimously.

- v. Rebecca Ross motioned to recommend to Conservation Commission to rescind the previous cease and desist order on the new NEMBA trail construction at Broken Ground and proceed with construction with the recommendations from the Trails Subcommittee in the previous motion. Cheever seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
 - vi. Regarding the process for changing trail routes, Rebecca Ross asked a question regarding how we communicate how changes to the plan are communicated; Matt Bowser noted that he would work within the constraints identified by the committee.
 - 1. Rebecca Ross noted that as a best practice in the future for trails with special considerations, such as having a boundary or corridor of note, these considerations should be known and clearly identified before the trail is approved and built.
 - vii. Nick Holmes, a member of NEMBA and resident of Concord, spoke to say how proud they are of the trails they have built; to make it sustainable; to note that they are for everyone; and to build trails where they are needed – in this case for the community including youth who are located off Loudon Road/Concord Heights area.
 - viii. Andrew Gould - Ry's Way is an incredible way to ride this trail.
- b. Northerly bypass at discontinued District 5 Rd –
 - i. It was noted that members of the committee need to set date for site walk.
 - ii. It was noted that as a condition of the Woodard settlement agreement, "The City shall, through the Concord Conservation Commission using its ordinary trail planning procedures, establish a formal City trail northerly of the stone wall along the northerly sideline of the discontinued section of the District No. 5 Road..."
 - iii. The requirement is that the public trail is north of the stone wall made on City property. This is where the portion of the West End Farm Trail to Carter Hill also begins.
 - iv. After some deliberation, the subcommittee determined that because member Rebecca Ross was recused in the issue, a quorum is not available to vote on this issue and could not fulfill the Conservation Commission's request to begin the process for creation of a formal City trail northerly of the stone wall as outlined above. It was decided to postpone until such a time that a quorum is available.
- 4. Review draft Annual Report for 2023 and set 2024 Goals (see Recommendations in adopted Concord Trails Plan)
 - a. The Annual Report was reviewed and a few changes were noted:
 - i. Add additional trail work day by Mark Cheever at Broken Ground to remove bittersweet
 - ii. Hosted a group volunteer at Batchelder Mill Road Trails
 - b. A motion was made by Mark Cheever to approve the Annual Report with these changes. Rebecca Ross second; unanimously approved.
 - c. 2024 Goals

- i. Review of goals (numbers below 1-7 align with 2024 goals draft)
 - 1. Proposed change: Increased public awareness of invasives around Concord; Chair Philippe noted that information underway at Unitarian Universalist to promote awareness there and with UNH extension on pruning of ornamentals.
 - 2. Proposed change: Proactively engage volunteer trail stewards to ensure every trail is checked ideally twice per year.
 - 3. No changes
 - 4. No changes
 - 5. Complete signage relating to old winter recreation area on the Carter Hill connector trail.
 - 6. No changes
 - 7. Proposed change: Identify location for at least one All Persons Trail.
 - ii. Note on #4 regarding the City's trails guide: changes were made and proposed earlier by the subcommittee but it's unknown if they were actually updated into the latest version. Unknown if there was a reprinting recently, but good to tackle this before the next reprinting.
 - iii. A question was raised if we should be leading Community Hikes; they are noted to be of value to the community; perhaps that is an opportunity to partner with a local organization to organize, promote these.
 - iv. Andy Gould proposed that we organized goals as larger overarching objectives and then projects as part of their goals. This was well received by members of the committee.
 - v. Add a goal/project to place a bench at Curtisville Pond but will require a site visit and a determination of how much help will be needed. Gail and Ron will coordinate on this.
 - vi. Add a goal: reviewing and editing the current procedures for new trails and procedures for dismantling a trail.
- 5. Review Documents
 - a. The following items on the agenda were pushed to next meeting:
 - i. Amendments to adopted Procedure for Approving New Trail or Trail Network
 - ii. Amendments to adopted Trail Criteria
- 6. Other items discussed:
 - a. Question was raised if we could email group members with a city employee on the thread to ensure transparency; note that we cannot communicate where there might be a quorum.
 - b. Downed trees at Rolfe Park and Swope Park and Penacook Lake Vista and removed the skeleton at Broken Ground powerlines.
 - c. Andy Gould will be voted on tonight at Conservation Commission, but still have openings for three alternates. Andy's appointment will result in a full subcommittee with the only vacancies being for the three alternate positions.
 - d. Mark Cheever requested information on subcommittee makeup in terms of location and interests.

7. Adjourn: Mark Cheever motioned to adjourn. Rebecca Ross seconded. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Prepared by Mark Cheever, member of the Trails Subcommittee