

Conservation Committee Meeting
February 13, 2018

Present: Jim Tasse, Marti Blair, Mark Fleming, Jeremy Gabrielson, Zach Matzkin, Robert Petitt, Mitch Wacksman

Maureen O'Meara (staff)

1. Mr Gabrielson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.
2. Citizen comments. No one present wished to speak.
3. Minutes. Both sets of minutes were approved 7-0.
4. Town property disposition (U3-92). The Conservation Committee reviewed a referral from the Town Council regarding a request to purchase the town lot on Ocean View Rd (U3-92). The committee reviewed the greenbelt map and noted the lot is located next to a paper street. The lot could potentially provide access to adjacent vacant land and had building potential. The committee noted that the existing paper street has a trail and that an easement conveyed from the lot could preserve access to abutting open space. The committee also questioned the offer, \$35,000, was low for buildable land. The town recently purchased land to expand access to Loveitt Woods. The lot did not have road frontage and the town paid \$75,000.

At the conclusion of discussion, the committee approved the following recommendation, by a vote of 7-0.:

The Conservation Committee recommends that the town owned lot U3-92 not be sold to preserve options for future greenbelt connectivity and neighborhood open space. If the lot is sold, the Conservation Committee recommends that a 15' wide easement be retained on the southeast corner and the proceeds of the sale be placed in the land acquisition fund.

Maureen will prepare the Conservation Committee's recommendation to the Town Council and send it to Chair Gabrielson for approval.

5. Greenbelt trail priorities. The committee reviewed the updated priorities chart and made adjustments. The committee voted 7-0 to recommend funding to place erosion control mix on the Spurwink trail. They also noted that tree limbs on the trail need to be removed.

The committee discussed failing bridges as Gull Crest and the need for additional boardwalk on muddy sections of the Outer Loop trail. The committee agreed that repairing existing boardwalk was a priority this year and that a new project should be added to finish off boardwalk on the Outer Loop trail. Ms. O'Meara noted a failing bridge on the Two Lights trail, and the committee agreed it was due for replacement.

The committee discussed creating a kid-friendly bike track on the school campus, using NEMBA (New England Mountain Biking Association) funding. The project will be put on hold for now.

The committee then discussed major improvements to the Winnick Woods trail system, funded with NEMBA support. The proposal is to machine build existing trails using a mini-excavator. The trails would initially be widened to 3'-4', roots and organic soils would be removed to the mineral layer. This would address the root bound condition of the trails, making the surface better for all trail users. Up to \$30,000 could be applied for by NEMBA.

Jamie Wright, 2 Seal Cove Ln, owns bike shops in Portland, etc and has been riding on machine built trails across the country. They are more enjoyable, not root bound, and are already in Vermont, New Hampshire and starting in Maine. He is interested in financially supporting trail upgrades in Cape.

Mr. Gabrielson asked about average costs and Mr. Tasse estimated \$6,000 for 1.5 mile of trail. Mr. Wacksman asked if you fill or excavate existing trails. It depends on what you find. If you deroot and go to the mineral layer, the trail drains better and the surface hardens. Mr. Fleming asked about damage to trees from removing roots and the response is that the trees remain healthy. Ms. Blair questioned if a machine built trail meets our definition of "rustic trail?" It is less rustic but our trail management plan does not prohibit creating better trails. It was noted that the trail would not be per se ADA compliant, but would be more accessible. It would increase bike use, but the trails would absolutely remain multi-user trails where bikes yield to pedestrians and dog walkers.

Mr. Fleming asked for more detail about the NEMBA grant. Mr. Tasse explained that the local chapter, NEMBA, would make the application. He would need a letter of support and other applications would also compete. Even without the grant, other funding may be available. Mr. Matzking asked if the machine method works with existing trails and Mr. Tasse said it would.

The committee voted 7-0 to support the idea of a machine trail upgrade in Winnick Woods, as a Phase 1 pilot project.

6. Budget. The committee reviewed a draft FY2019 budget. They voted 7-0 to recommend the draft budget for consideration by the Town Council.
7. Greenbelt Implementation projects. The committee were happy with the no alteration signs. They asked about funding for boat racks and available funds from annual permit revenue.
8. Comprehensive plan. Due to time, the committee agreed to delay the discussion until the March meeting.
9. Monthly Trail walk. The committee agreed to schedule walks beginning in March/April. Mr. Gabrielson noted that he has been contacted by CELT regarding coleading the June 2nd Cross town walk. He will be out of town, but Mr. Fleming may be available to do it.
10. Items for next meeting. Mr. Gabrielson asked if anyone would like to attend the annual MECC meeting next month and no one will attend. The committee would like to invite Kurt from Two Lights State Park to the April meeting to talk about the trail connecting to Two Lights Rd. The committee will also finalize goals at next month's meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.