

Readfield Trails Committee Minutes

October 27, 2020

Present: Paul Bessette, Nancy Buker, Greg Durgin, Bob Harris, Jeanne Harris, Rob Peale, Holly Rahmlow

Excused: Greg Leimbach, Henry Whittemore

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Holly agreed to be timekeeper.

Brian Tarbuck of the Greater Augusta Utility District, who has been working with Rob on plans for a trail at Carleton Pond, was in attendance. Last May some Trails members walked the property with Brian. Some of that potential trail is very rough, so Rob suggested that we start with a trail that goes along the east side of the pond. This route will require less work and offers a nice view of the pond. Brian suggested we also make use of the existing snowmobile trail.

We will still need a memorandum of understanding or a trail agreement before proceeding on any work. Rob has written such an agreement, which Brian presented to the GAUD board. Brian said their attorney suggested the addition of a paragraph prohibiting the erection of any structures, and said he would send the revised agreement back to Rob. Brian also reviewed some of the issues of concern to the GAUD board.

These issues include who would lock and unlock gates and the potential for cars being there overnight, unruly dogs or mountain bikers, parking, plowing and protecting the rights of snowmobilers. No motorized bikes or other vehicles will be allowed on the trails.

He also mentioned the need to update the current map, which is badly outdated. The Readfield Conservation Commission is working on that.

Brian also said the board is once again discussing the possibility of selling some of the land. The pond would not be included in any sale, so our trail along it would be safe. Before we begin we also need an environmental permit for construction.

Access to the pond is another issue. Road sightlines for the parking area are poor, and currently the gates are locked unless someone makes arrangements to open them. Brian said a secondary gate could be installed to limit access to the trail and thus allow the parking area gates to be left open. Rob spoke to Eric about the possibility of having the parking area plowed and that seems doable.

Rob suggested we install a kiosk with a list of the rules, and we discussed those costs. Rob said he plans to go back and walk the trail to see if it can go all the way to the dam. He will continue to take the lead in planning for this project and will inform the committee as needed.

The minutes were distributed. Rob moved they be approved; Jeanne seconded. Approved unanimously

Jeanne reported that we have \$1,221.28 in our account. Since our last meeting we have spent \$693.74. Altogether we received \$3,080 in honor of Ken Clark. On October 15 an engraved bench was purchased and placed along the Fairgrounds trail across from the tree planted in his honor. The bench, including installation, was \$2,331.54. The remaining funds, \$748.46, were added to our account.

Nancy said she understood we were to have a separate account for donations rather than merging them with town funds. She said she had arranged for a separate account for the \$100 we received from the envelope kiosks as well as another small donation and the money for Ken should be included in that account. Jeanne said that in the paperwork Teresa gave her that all our money was in that one account.

We discussed ways to keep track of donated money. Some members felt that those funds should be kept separately since we can spend donated funds on non-town property. Greg said that if the Select Board authorizes an expenditure we can spend town funds on non-town property such as the trail to the Meetinghouse. Jeanne said she would look into the issue.

The application to DOT for the culvert installation to allow the Morrill Road connector trail to cross Route 17 has been approved. Rob spoke to Eric about it, and the money is in the budget, but it's not a priority and the trail is not likely to be used in the winter. We can go ahead and work on the trail. Rob will put out an email call for workers to help with that project.

The Esker Trail also needs work. Entry by the bus garage is nearly obliterated by overgrowth of bamboo. This trail also awaits two culverts, and we might need to put down woodchips on the new loop that Greg D. and Bob cleared to avoid a low-lying area. Greg D. said he would take the lead on a work day for this trail.

Greg D. announced that a Trunk or Treat event would be held Saturday at the Fairgrounds, and that librarians are trying to get a grant for a story walk on the trail by the Meetinghouse.

Next meeting, if held, will be November 24.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow