

Trails Coordinating Task Force

Thursday, June 22, 2017

4:00 PM Groton Senior Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

4:00 PM

II. Attendance

a. Members in Attendance:

Matt Allen, Joellen Anderson, Mark Berry, June Evered, Debralyn Marshall-Baker, Carla Hershel, Denise Descheneaux, Joan Smith

b. Alternates in Attendance:

Sidney VanZandt
Tom Jankee

c. Members Absent:

d. Guests in Attendance:

None

III. Citizen's Petitions, Comments and Concerns

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes – March 23, 2017

Joellen Anderson moved to approve minutes, Carla Henschel seconded.
Unanimous vote to approve.

V. Correspondence/Communication

None

VI. Reports

a. Avalonia

Avalonia erected a new sign for the Anderson Marshland/Woodlawns property along Route 215 in Noank. One abutter is restoring the stone wall and has cleared vegetation to get access to dig out the fallen stones. Avalonia volunteers have volunteered to tag horseshoe crabs at Sandy Point Nature Preserve and Bluff Points. Avalonia now has 26 properties with trails on them.

The Benedict Benson property was dedicated and there is a 1.5 mile long trail.

The annual meeting is scheduled for tonight with many new members nominated for the board.

b. Copp Property

Mark reported: Just an hour ago he took a call from an unusually calm hiker who had been lost on the Copp property for 2 hours. Working with her Google maps GPS locator, he helped her get oriented toward Rte. 184. He got a call from her a little later once she found her way out. Joellen suggested that there be signs pointing toward the parking lot sprinkled though out the trails since people do get lost at Copp despite the new signage.

Joellen reported: Consider adding signs that point back to parking area.

Matt Allen reported that on Trails Day, six people went on a hike to Eagle Claw ledge and back. It is a hidden ravine which you view at canopy level and was a little rough to get to because of the vernal pools and downed trees.

Cindy will be leading a guided hike at the Copp Property tomorrow with the OATS program.

c. X-Town Trail

Sidney VanZandt reminded us to write it down with a capital X, not the word "Cross". On Trails Day they had a group of 8 to 10 people for the hike. At Beebe Pond, the top of the dam is dangerous and needs a bridge and a boardwalk through the wetlands. There is a large tree down across the trail end from Jerome. GOSA also had an Avery Farm and Sheep Farm tour. Also they did two Tilcon Property hikes with the Last Spring Valley group. There are 6 to 7 ridges crossed as you head north. June added that the trails are not well marked at Sheep Farm.

d. GOSA

This is GOSA's 50th anniversary year. A booklet is being prepared for release later this year. The Tilcon Property was purchased by the State in March. There are no maps, and some blazes. Very steep and not for the faint of heart. GOSA will be meeting with State DEP to begin the Management plan. State will be responsible for signs and maps. The only restriction will be no mountain bikes near or in the pitch pole pines. The

existing trails are good single width trails and the mountain bikers have made ramps and bridges where they need them. Right now, you have to enter through the Paulson (sp?) property to get to the south side of the Tilcon Property. Also a culvert that goes under I-95 to the Holstein property on the way to Sheep Farm. There is an entrance at 127 Rogers Road as well. GOSA spent a lot of time cleaning up dump areas on the property. 18 pick-up truck loads were taken to the dump. The Navy volunteers were a great help.

e. **Town Trails**

Mark Berry reported that Richard Snarski has marked the wetlands, and the wetlands have been surveyed in back of Cutler school as the first step for engineering to design a bridge for the trail.

On Monday, July 31st at the Town Annex, from 6 to 8 PM, Community Room #1, the VHB consultant will present the study on the bike path from Industrial Drive to Thomas Road, and the options considered. It will show how to deal with the road in front of Midway Pizza, maybe expanding the boardwalk. A letter will be sent to the abutters notifying them of this meeting.

f. **Tri-Town Trails**

Trying to access trails crossing tracks and Rte. 8 (?) at the northern end of town. They had their annual meeting recently. There is a need to do a multiuse trail with two bridges just south of Preston Plains Park. It will connect two town properties. Letters have gone out to the landowners requesting signatures for the formal right of ways. Some water studies for the bridges need to be done. Hope to go to Army Corps of Engineers in Sept for permitting. Got a verbal commitment from DOT via the Fed for \$500,000 grant for alternate transportation over two years. Project should be shovel-ready when (?) grant gets authorized in a year or two. Tom said they got an original grant for planning and it should be good for two years and can cover the Army Corp submittal work.

VII. Unfinished Business

Mark Berry asked for volunteers to help lead day camp hikes this year since last year's hike was so successful. Joan volunteered to lead a hike on July 14 at 10 AM and Denise volunteered to lead one on August 10th.

Sydney VanZandt brought up that in 50 years of "open space" battles in Groton, there is still no good place for swimming for Groton Residents, nor for the schools. Mark indicated that for the first three years he was with the Town, there

was a feasibility study for an aqua center included in the budget requests but it was voted down each time by the council.

VIII. New Business

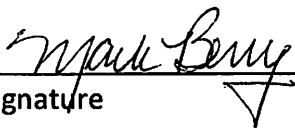
Carla asked about planning for the Poquonnock Bridge area. Matt Allen indicated that they were looking at a land use study for redevelopment of village centers but it was very preliminary.

IX. Next meeting September 23, 2017, 4 pm Groton Senior Center

X. Adjournment

Joan moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Carla. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Minutes have been approved and accepted.



Signature

12/8/17

Date