Hinesburg Trails Committee

Minutes of August 18, 2021 Meeting

Approved

Present: Jane Sheldon, Colin Hunt, Chic McArthur, Oren Guttmann, Ray Mainer

Regrets: Nick Certo, Bret Gollan, Chris Rivard, Peter Modley

Guests: Patterson Frazier, Barbara Forauer, James Donovan via phone

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Minutes- Ray made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 23rd meeting, Colin seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
2. Expenses – The only expense incurred so far this year has been the gravel Chic purchased for the Russell turnpike. The amount is TBD.
3. Russell Turnpike – The original plan for this project is officially finished at 150’ feet. Many thanks to Andrea Morgante for lending us the equipment to move and place the gravel. Ray is now a certified front loader operator. Also, thanks go to volunteer Brian Bock who helped on this stage. Chic reported that with the extra gravel remaining we could add 35’ to the upper level of the trail or extend lower level. The cost for wood and spikes would be roughly $100. May have enough to put on north part of trail. Oren made a motion to spend up to $150 to extend the turnpike. Ray seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
4. Russell Trail Puncheons – Chic reported that the puncheons between the kiosk and the bridge have sunk into the clay. He suggested that we could pour concrete into the mold that the support lumber would leave when the puncheons were lifted, and reset them onto that harder surface. He said that James Donegan had already approved it. There was discussion as to whether the puncheon would slide off the concrete. Ray said he could anchor it with a spike or rebar. We decided to give it a try and Oren mentioned he may have a bag of concrete to donate.
5. Buck Hill Rd Parking Area – Colin has been in touch with Alex, who suggested the TC get estimates from at least two contractors on how much it would cost for an outside firm to do the repair. The Highway Dept is very busy and it may be cheaper and more timely to get someone else to do it. Once we get the estimates Alex can present it to the Highway Dept and Select Board for a decision. Colin will be the point person with contractors. This expense will not come out of the TC budget.
6. Donovan and O’Donnell Property- This area of development is across from CVU. James Donovan phoned in to discuss potential trails on this land, which he and Oren had walked through in July. Jim had provided a map with the suggested trail and we agreed it would be the best route. Jim asked in what form we envisioned the trail. Oren said we would put in a single track trail but we may need to extend the easement to connect with the NRG trail. Lot 6 is forested and we may be able to put in more trails there, but Jim is not committing now. We agreed to do a scouting trip late fall.
7. Buck Hill Spur – Chic had asked James if we could reroute the trail easement from this entrance onto the access road. James said he sometimes uses that road for moving livestock so would not be open to that idea. We may want to approach him again in future after the development begins.
8. Baldwin Rd Extension – Oren has emailed Thad a couple of times about starting the work on the and will follow up. Jane mentioned some area on his property near Charlotte Rd was mowed already.
9. Frost Property – This land is at the corner of Boutin and O’Neill Roads. The owners want to subdivide and develop it. They had approached Mitch Cypes to see if they could use improving Boutin Rd, where it is now Class IV, in exchange of having an easement across their property. Oren pointed out that it would end up putting users out onto Shelburne Falls Rd, whereas the original easement would not. It wasn’t clear where the original one would lead so Jane suggested we do a site visit to see if we could connect to other easements in town. Oren will check with Mitch.
10. Geprags Connector – Colin had recently reached out via email to the landowner and is waiting to hear back.
11. Laster Property – This property is on Mechanicsville Rd, adjacent to the cemetery. Barbara Forauer is on the town Planning Commission and had attended a recent DRB meeting, and was concerned about the plan to connect to Red Pine Rd. Oren said the owner at the very end of that road does not mind the trail there as long as it is not marked on town maps. The map Laster provided showed proposed easements and Oren suggested we might be able to connect to Red Pine Rd from one of them. Chic pointed out that some of the development seemed very dense for “rural residential” land, but Barbara said the DRB is aware of that issue. Chic asked if the TC could make it a condition of approval that the developer create and maintain the trails, wherever they ended up. The TC will continue to monitor the progress of this project.
12. Town Forest Logging – Colin reported that a portion of the Eagle’s Trail will be closed during the winter of 2021/22. He will bring maps to the next meeting so we can plan a rerouting around the work. Colin will also coordinate with Ethan Tapper to find a time for him to come to one of our meetings to review the logging plans.
13. Burritt Rd – The Thibaults bought the land which surrounds other owners and want to develop it. They are waiting for wetlands approval. Barbara reported that the DRB did not make it a condition to place easements through the development. This is in early stages and the TC will continue to monitor it.
14. Carse Addition to the Hinesburg Town Forest – The town is committed to buying this 291-acre parcel, but the TC will not be responsible for maintaining the trails. The Fellowship of the Wheel will.
15. Lavigne Hill – This connection project is on hold for now.
16. Observatory Rd – Town land ends at a gate where the observatory area is. The landowner adjacent to it wants to get the town to release easement on his property. Oren will let Todd know we are interested in keeping any easements. Chic suggested we make sure that any additional development includes possible new easements.
17. Meeting in the Park – On September 18th the town will hold an event on the lot behind the Fire House to give residents a chance to provide ideas on how best to use it. Oren suggested that the TC should be represented as there are trails and easements connecting to it.
18. Nagle Property – This land is on Gilman Rd and is up for sale. The broker had asked the TC if we were willing to give up the easement which is on it. It turns out the easement is one of the Vermont Land Trust’s, which does not give up easements. Chic will check with the VTLT to see if we can get a list or map of other of their easements so we can explore setting up additional trails or connecting to existing ones.
19. Record Articles – Chic will supply Jane with details about the Russell turnpike project and she will write the article for the September issue.
20. Avenza – Chic reported that 535 maps have been downloaded and suggest dropping paper maps. Jane mentioned she often runs into people while restocking the Hayden Hill kiosks, who appreciate the availability of those maps. This discussion will be on-going.
21. Hayden Hill West Parking Area – Ray made a motion to ask the town to instruct the Highway Dept to fix this parking area. Chic seconded and the motion was passed unanimously. Ray will send an email to Todd with this request.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 15th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Sheldon, Secretary