
BOS Preserve Ad Hoc Committee Minutes 07/27/2017

TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Board of Selectmen
The Preserve Ad Hoc Committee

Susan Esty
Chris Cryder
Kathleen Connolly

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Judy Preston
Liz Swenson
Tom O'Dell
Kacey Constable

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, July 27, 2017
6:00 – 7:30 P.M.
PARKS & RECREATION CENTER
308 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ray Allen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Chris Cryder
Kathy Connolly
Judy Preston
Liz Swenson
Susan Esty (arrived at 6:30 p.m.)

Members Absent

Tom O'Dell
Kacey Constable

Town Hall Staff Present

Ray Allen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Kathleen King, Recording Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Preserve Ad-Hoc Committee Special Meeting of April 27, 2017 as presented. **MADE** by C. Cryder, **SECONDED** by K. Connolly; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** K. Connolly, J. Preston, C. Cryder; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** L. Swenson; **APPROVED:** 3-0-1.

IV. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Robert Nussbaum from the Essex Land Trust was in attendance as was Bob Loreuz from the Old Saybrook Land Trust, Honor Lawler from the Trust for Public Land and William Hochholzer, Forestry Supervisor, DEEP Forestry.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Interim Trails

Eagle Scout Matt Alsante completed his project which was designing and constructing the wayfinding signs on the Blue trail. There will be more Eagle Scout projects coming up. Beard Lumber provided all of the lumber for all of the wayfinding signs for the scout project.

K. Connolly had recommended Ben Collins from the Trail Building Company be consulted about trail design. He met with K. Connolly, R. Allen and others, and he submitted a proposal to design and build wet area for the lowest areas of the Red Trail and the Blue Trail.

K. Connolly explained that this proposal is for areas that may go through vernal pools. One area of the Red Trail, for example, is, as B. Collins describes "extremely wet and unfit for a tread way currently." He evaluated the trails, and he gave price estimates for hand building the trails, foot/bike bridge re-routing, cost for labor and materials.

Ben has done work on a lot of trails in Vermont for many purposes such as mountain biking, cross country skiing, hiking, etc. He also has a degree in Environmental Studies.

K. Connolly said there is a national professional trail builders association called The Professional Trail Builder's Association. There are only a few people who do this type of work. It's a specialty, and therefore, the people who do this are very busy. B. Collins is willing to come to a meeting on 8/12/17 to discuss his proposal in more detail and to answer any questions.

The Southeast corner of the bog is most in need of trail work, according to K. Connolly. This is referred to as "Location 1 (90 feet)" on the proposal. She said there has been a lot of beaver activity there, and there are beaver lodges and dams. The trail there is so deeply rutted. K. Connolly said the trail could be re-routed with a bit of work. Another solution would be to build a boardwalk which would allow different types of "traffic" hikers, bikers, horses, etc. to avoid each other. This could be done with scouts. The rest of the proposed work wouldn't be done until the inventory is completed and the State approves it.

There is new technology with bogs and wetlands for piers, modular, etc.

C. Cryder suggested the work not be done on the Blue Trail at this time.

W. Hochholzer distributed a map showing the 25.6 miles of trails that have been GPS'd. Each trail has been categorized by the primary use of each trail. Impact has to be measured and considered.

W. Hochholzer explained that a 10-year plan will have a work schedule with all of the work highlighted by year which will make it much easier to gain access to the reimbursable grant funds. The Public Use Assessment needs to be done to move this process along. Then, there will be more clarity about who the contractors are, when they are due to be paid, etc. The CT DEEP requires public input on the Public Use Assessment. The Cooperative Management Agreement talks about impact and use of the property. This will all be reviewed and language will be developed for permitted uses that need to be considered.

W. Hochholzer talked about the challenges involved in the designation of trails, how trails are established and how important it is to recognize management. He explained how important it is to ensure the safety of the people using the trails, being good stewards of the properties and considering the uses from different perspectives.

B. Update on Winter Weed Treatment

K. Connolly said the weed treatment has yielded great results. Some of the weeds have been almost completely eradicated. The contractor doing the weed treatment asked about phragmite treatment. K. Connolly asked W. Hochholzer if the State will do phragmite treatment.

K. Connolly explained that there is an upper edge "skirt" around the bog where there is still a lot of Japanese Barberry that should be treated. Also, follow up treatment on anything that may bounce back would be smart. She said there is a significant improvement since the weed treatment.

C. Committee Updates

There were no Committee updates.

D. Any Other Old Business

There was no other Old Business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Request For Proposal (RFP)

William Hochholzer said he reviewed the RFP recently, and he does not feel that it needs to be completely rewritten at all but just modified. The Public Use Assessment needs to be updated and expanded with more information especially the public input piece. Once the work plan has been approved, the reimbursable grant money can be used for anything that has been identified in the Plan.

H. Lawlor said TPL would want the RFP to go out for a fair bidding practice. Funding from TPL would be available for the Plan. She asked W. Hochholzer if TPL should put out the RFP and pay the contractor directly. He said that could be done. H. Lawlor said TPL would just want assurances that the CMC has approved the work being done.

R. Allen will work with Town Planner Christine Nelson to modify and amend the RFP. Then, W. Hochholzer will meet with First Selectman Carl Fortuna to get it approved.

W. Hochholzer explained that if a survey is put on the web site and an advertised public meeting is held that would satisfy the criteria from CT DEEP. The important factor is that there is an opportunity for the public to give their input.

C. Cryder said he thinks the RFP as written is very good. He said he reviewed the responses and comments made by Burns and McDonald who had bid on the RFP initially. He said their comments are very valuable in understanding the gaps in the RFP. C. Cryder said he feels the RFP should be expanded to include a full trail design. The trail design component should be included in the RFP because then we'd have a full plan.

W. Hochholzer said it's too soon to put the final trail design into the RFP until the natural bio-assessment survey has been completed.

B. Any Other New Business

C. Cryder asked when the Westbrook parking lot will be completed because the Yellow trail needs to be connected to the parking lot. He said map updates will be required.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next meeting of The Preserve Ad Hoc Committee will be on Thursday, August 24, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Building, 308 Main Street.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen King, Recording Clerk