

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for January 9, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiske, Steve Flanders, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, Byron Haynes, Nick Krembs, John McCormick, Bill Mlacek, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Justin Strauss, Liz Russell

Cathie Redpath reported to the committee by email that the Blue Ribbon Trail has now been fully marked by blue ribbons and that the trail was almost entirely free of downed trees.

There has been no recent communication from the National Forest Service concerning a proposal submitted by this committee and the Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association about trails within the Appalachian Trail Corridor and associated parking areas.

Nick Krembs reviewed much appreciated suggestions from Bob Holley concerning ways of fund raising for a replacement bridge on Brown School House Road. A base of substantial funding such as might be obtained through one or more grants would provide a good start for additional fund raising. A decision on the grant application now under review might be forthcoming as soon as within about two months and if favorable would leave several months for additional fund raising before construction could begin in August.

One major objective in publicity about the bridge replacement will be to inform those residents who might be entirely unaware of the collapse of the original bridge and plans for its replacement. Collapse of the former bridge was a major loss in town infrastructure. Replacement of the bridge is viewed by many residents as fulfilling an obligation by the town to maintain its infrastructure.

The need to replace a large quantity of supporting fill removed from both sides of the bridge site during removal of the collapsed bridge represents roughly half of the estimated cost of the replacement bridge. No other crossing site which might require less fill is suitable because access for the water crossing is available only at the original site of the bridge. The proposed bridge is to be of high quality and therefore should last for a number of decades while requiring relatively low maintenance in contrast to other conceivable bridges of much shorter longevity and requiring continued substantial maintenance. A greater initial outlay will enable a long term lower cost.

Gerry Plummer now has the new website for the Trails Committee online and is planning, with aid from others in the committee, to produce a more complete version which can then be advertised through the town listserv. Annual cost of the website is to be about \$100. Additional photographs and videos will be welcomed for the site.

Initial offerings on the website are to include a question and answer (Q&A) section about the bridge replacement. Steve Flanders is to prepare a draft of the Q&A.

When the new website has been more fully prepared, notification is to be sent to the town listserv. Posting of notices about the bridge project is planned for all town bulletin boards and all trail kiosks. Publicity in the Valley News might reach residents who do not follow the town

listserv or see the posters. An effort is to be made to encourage all trail users to go to the polls and vote in support of the replacement bridge. Gerry Plummer offered to meet with members of the public in person to person efforts to promote the bridge replacement. Strong support will be sought from the town recreation community.

Bill Mlacek reported on recent activities of the Hanover Trails Committee, and a few aspects can be mentioned here. Trail adopters monitor the 110 miles of Hanover trails and at least annually inspect trail structures such as bridges and stairways. A trail with handicapped accessibility was completed along Mink Brook in October and will be launched in the spring. Opening of the Trescott lands to the public has provided a major focus for recent trail work. The Upper Valley Trails Alliance regularly provides assistance in the work of the Hanover Trails Committee. A project for snow making for cross country skiing is among the initiatives now being promoted by that committee.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of the Norwich Trails Committee making improvements along the Class IV Burton Woods Road, where water flows have impeded use at times in recent years.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark