

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for March 4, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiske, Steve Flanders, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Don McCabe, John McCormick, Elena Mihaly, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Cathie Redpath, Colin Stemper, Brie Swenson

Cathie Redpath is planning to cut up downed trees on the Heyl Trail. A couple of downed trees on the Ballard Trail will need removal. It was noted that Cathie Redpath has recently provided significant help in keeping the Cossingham Road Farm Trails cleared.

The "Discover Norwich Trails" program of this committee serves a) to introduce people to Norwich Trails, b) to increase their knowledge of those trails, and c) to encourage their support for those trails. A free guided hike is to be offered for the public at a regular time each month, starting in May and continuing into fall.

Don McCabe and Brie Swenson spoke about a planned trail bridge to cross Blood Brook to connect Huntley Meadow with Beaver Meadow Road. This new bridge will functionally replace a suspension bridge which some years ago provided that connection. The new bridge is to be downstream from the old site. State approval has been given for the crossing at the new site. Funding is to be provided by contributions including a most generous start-up gift from an anonymous donor. At this meeting the Trails Committee agreed to provide labor to assemble the prefabricated bridge and to help move it into position across the brook.

Article 5 in support of construction of a new bridge to replace one which collapsed on Brown School House Road in 2018 was approved by Norwich voters on March 3. The efforts of Steve Flanders have greatly aided in promoting this new bridge which will be a key link in reconnecting two major parts of the Norwich trail network. A decision by the state on a submitted grant application for funding for that bridge is anticipated in early April. Additional potential funding sources were briefly discussed.

Guest Colin Stemper introduced himself. He has recently moved to West Fairlee and offers services in mechanized trail building. One of his recently completed trail projects is on the Trescott lands in Hanover. He was invited to attend an upcoming meeting of the Recreation Council.

In recent weeks Gerry Plummer has made a number of upgrades on the Trails Committee website, and this committee is much appreciative of his efforts in getting the website underway and then improved. Cody Williams of the Conservation Commission is to be coadministrator for the website. It is anticipated that one or more editors will also be designated to help with the website.

No specific plans have yet been made for trail closures during mud season, but the committee is prepared to respond as needed in cooperation with the Department of Public Works.

The Trails Committee is planning work sessions on the third Sunday of each month starting in May. Clearing of the Converse Trail, a loop off the upper Ballard Trail, is to be the goal of the May work session.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark