



Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, February 3, 2021

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81843241733>

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee members: David Hubbard, Craig Layne, Cody Williams

Volunteers and members of the public: Nick Krembs (facilitator), Stephen Flanders (scribe), George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskén, Peter Griggs, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Cathie Redpath, Brie Swenson

AGENDA

A quorum of the Norwich Trails Committee was present, when the meeting came to order at 7 pm.

1. *Approval of agenda*—Flanders summarized the agenda. There were no suggested changes.
2. *Comments from those present*—Krembs invited comments about items not on the agenda. Two topics were discussed:
 - Krembs reported the passing of Liz Russell, Norwich Trails founding volunteer and benefactor since 1996-7. Discussion revolved around possible ways to honor her contributions to Norwich trails and recreation.
 - Sean Ogle reported on the activities of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, which operated fairly normally in 2020, especially with Trail Corps. UVTA will be hiring an intern for trail work. The tool shed was renovated with a \$2-K grant—items are available for the Norwich Trails volunteers. Town funds are available to underwrite activities. He offered to bring Gile Mountain traffic numbers at the next meeting.
3. *Report on fund balances available for trails*—Flanders reported that there appeared to be remaining authorized balances, as follows:
 - For FY 2020-21 in the Brown Schoolhouse Road project of \$4.3K out of the \$80K authorized by town meeting vote.
 - The town financial summary for December 2020, showed a balance of \$5121.90, much of which is earmarked for a scoping study of the Gile Mountain parking lot expansion.
 - Women's Club funds for the Heyl Trail bog bridge are believed to be fully expended, however (later in the meeting) Hubbard reported an approximately \$700 balance to be applied to the improvement of the Lower Ballard Trail.

Trail infrastructure

4. *Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned*—A few leaners in the upper section of Ballard may be actionable in the spring. Williams reported that the Blue Ribbon Trail is lightly used in winter.
5. *Trail infrastructure data collection*—Flanders introduced the map locations of “underserved locations for signage” for the Trail Information Standards working group to consider. He reported the suggestion for having infrastructure items described by distance from access point, as well as by lat/long. Upcoming survey could provide mileage.
6. *Trail information standards*—Krembs announced the formation of a working group to develop recommendations for trail information standards—including kiosks, signage, and blazes. It will report its recommendations in the March meeting.
 - Volunteers for the group were: Gerry Plummer, Cody Williams, Peter Griggs, Cathie Redpath, Jim Faughnan, Steve Flanders, John McCormick.
 - A Zoom meeting is set for Wednesday, February 10, 7 pm, hosted by Cody Williams.
 - The working group will report at the March meeting.
7. *Proposed 2021 trail work projects*—Krembs introduced the three areas:
 - a. Lower Ballard bank and gully crossings: Krembs introduced the [January 14th survey of the Lower Ballard Trail](#) to assess problems with drainage and deterioration of the treadway. It was agreed to expend the balance of the Women’s Club funds on machine work, placing crushed stone on the lowest section in time for the grant deadline. Cathie Redpath offered a generous pledge to fund work further up the trail. This section was identified as the highest priority on the Ballard Trail and will be subject to a follow-up survey after snow melt.
 - b. Upper Ballard: Flanders introduced a variety of possible projects that were identified in an [October 2020 survey](#). Discussion revolved around having the Trail Corps or Vermont Youth Conservation Corps work here. This section was identified as a lower priority, but will be subject to a follow-up survey after snow melt.
 - c. Update: Access to Betty Booth trail. Swenson will follow up with the new property owners. Flanders relayed Layne’s suggestion that this topic become part of a general topic on developing a trails master plan, as required by the 2020 Norwich Town Plan.¹

Trail use

8. *Winter hikes*—Swenson outlined the Rec Department’s initiatives in developing a variety of outdoor activities, including a contract to groom ski trails on Parcel 5 and the Brookmead Trails.

¹ The 2020 Norwich Town Plan (P. 41) says: 6-3b Develop a master plan for future trails, paths, sidewalks, and bikeways. Use the master plan as a basis for pursuing grants and other funding for design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of planned improvements. On P. 58, it assigns the task to: Planning Director, Planning Commission, Trails Committee, Energy Committee.

Financial

9. *Clarification of purchasing procedures*—Following some conflicting characterizations of current procedures, Swenson offered to bring clarification from the town manager to the next meeting.
10. *Trails infrastructure categories for funding by 2021 grants*—Three topics were discussed:
 - Women’s Club funds: Paying for signs and kiosk information will be discussed at the March meeting.
 - Bench for the Ballard Trail at the Brown Schoolhouse Road crossing: As a result of public solicitations, Faughnan and Krembs have received sufficient commitment to fund a bench.
 - Mascoma Bank Grant: A Mascoma Bank Foundation grant was discussed as another funding source. Flanders offered to follow up.
11. *Planning for FY 2022-23 budget*—This topic was deferred to a later meeting.

Other

12. *Website update*—Adding minutes, link to infrastructure data, and winter hiking guidance.
13. *Norwich Historical Society program series for January and February “Discovering Norwich”*—Flanders, Krembs, and Plummer will be co-presenters of a PowerPoint has been prepared for presentation on February 11, highlighting winter hikes and the preparations needed.
14. *Continuation of the Discover Norwich Trails program in 2021*—Swenson concurred with Flanders’ suggestion that trails volunteers participate in hikes, organized as part of the Recreation Department program as leaders.
15. Items for March meeting
 - a. Kiosk information: Pricing of proposed material
 - b. Signage standards: Report
 - c. Grant proposal: First draft
 - d. Purchasing procedures
 - e. By what process to name the new trails on Parcel 5: Invite Jane Lemasurier
 - f. Possible lower approach to Gile Mountain Trail
 - g. Review of Gile Mountain traffic numbers.
 - h. Planning for FY 2022-23 budget
16. Items for future meetings
 - a. Possible adoption of trail from Cossingham to powerline ROW to form loop with AT, Heyl Trail.
 - b. Scoping survey of Ballard trail work suggestions.
 - c. Trails Master Plan: Update on the status of the Betty Booth and Heyl Trail concepts

17. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.