



Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee monthly meeting

7 pm, April 7, 2021

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

Attendees:

Norwich Trails Committee members present: Craig Layne, David Hubbard, and Cody Williams
Volunteers and members of the public: Nick Krembs (facilitator), Stephen Flanders (scribe), George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fisken, Peter Griggs, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Brie Swenson

AGENDA

The Norwich Trails Committee came to order at 7 pm.

1. *Approval of agenda*—Krembs summarized the agenda. There were no suggested changes.
2. *Comments from those present*—Krembs invited comments about items not on the agenda.
 - Krembs made a Zoom presentation to George Clark in recognition of his many years of service to the Norwich Trails Committee. Clark received a fleece vest with his name embroidered on the front and the Norwich Trails logo on the back. Those present applauded Clark's long and beneficial service on behalf of Norwich Trails.
3. Report on fund balances available for trails
 - Flanders reported that Norwich Women's Club (NWC) grant funds expired on March 31st.
 - Hubbard explained the background of the NWC grant for the improved treadway leading from Ballard Park. The grant was for \$800 was to the Land Management Commission, however miscommunication caused funds to be available too late to be applied. These funds may be re-applied for.
 - Faughnan volunteered to provide a bill of materials for a replacement bridge to the aging A-frame bridge. Hubbard will combine this into a consolidated Ballard Trail grant (together with the treadway project, described in Item 5), coordinated through the town accounts.

Trail infrastructure

4. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned
 - The downed tree reported on the upper Ballard Trail has been cleared.
 - Fisken described a problem area of long standing on the connection of Upper Loveland Road to Maple Hill Road that needs addressing. It is identified as a potential May work day.

5. Planning scope of work on Lower Ballard Trail—Identify scopes of work for 2021 and 2022:
 - a. Scope of work for 2021
 - NWC combined Ballard Trail grant:
 - Improve the treadway with stockpiled material for the first 400 feet. A contractor is known to be available for the work, subject to Norwich procurement procedures.
 - Replace bridge at A-frame. Faughnan to supply bill of materials.
 - Hubbard will apply for the grant in coordination with the town manager, deadline: April 15.
 - The Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) will do benching work on the lower Ballard Trail, using town funds appropriated to it for FY 2021-2.
 - b. Scope of work for 2022
 - Krembs outlined upgrading the heavily used section from the parking. It's wet and icy. Areas were flooded in 2017. Given that Ballard Park may become connected to town with a new, nearby sidewalk, he would like to identify trail restoration work from Ballard Park to powerline border that would complement that improvement.
 - Krembs met with UVTA representatives on April 7, looking for a budgetary estimate for the restoration work. He plans to circulate the estimate among town stakeholders. Two grant agencies are possible funding sources.
6. Trail information standards: Working group report
 - Williams reported on the [Trail Information Standards](#) document under development. The March 24th Zoom meeting of the working group made minor changes, regarding signpost height and having painted lettering on signs.
 - The discussion focused on the scope of the proposed NWC grant, regarding trail signage, wherein some details were refined and reflected in the discussion material for this NTC meeting.
7. Brown Schoolhouse Bridge and Happy Hill parking areas: Liaison with town management, regarding configurations and signage?
 - a. Proposed improvements of parking areas:
 - The proposed improvement to the *Brown Schoolhouse Bridge* parking area would include removal of the current waste blocks, installation of boulders along the drop-off to prevent vehicles from going over the edge, installation of signage for handicap parking, and a kiosk.
 - The proposed improvements of the *Happy Hill* parking area would include additional nose-in parking beyond the current sign and telephone pole, a kiosk, and signage that clarifies the limits of the turn-around in front of the current sign.
 - b. Choose liaisons—Motions were unanimously adopted to choose a Norwich Trails volunteer liaison on behalf of the NTC for each location (both moved by Williams and seconded by Layne).
 - Jim Faughnan to coordinate ideas, regarding the Brown Schoolhouse bridge parking configuration, with the chief of DPW on behalf of the NTC.
 - Steve Flanders to coordinate ideas, regarding the parking configuration at Happy Hill Road, with the chief of DPW on behalf of the NTC.

Trail use

8. Gile Mountain Trail parking update:
 - Layne described development of an interim management plan for the Woody Adams Conservation Forest, which is an area going under a protective conservation easement, consisting of the Town Forest, Gile Mountain, and the parcel between the two being sold to the town.
 - He has been working with abutters and other stakeholders, who support expansion of the Gile Mountain Trail parking area and acknowledge the role of the old powerline access track in supporting maintenance and improvements of the Gile Mountain trail. This road starts at a turn-out on Turnpike Road, crosses a stream, and is marked with a new kiosk. Some minor improvements to sections are indicated.
 - Discussion covered the status of the Gile Mountain parking lot scoping study, the mention of the Woody Adams Conservation Forest on kiosks, and protection of the Blue-Ribbon Trail corridor.
 - Layne offered to share a draft of the interim management plan with Norwich Trails volunteers for review and comment.

Financial

9. Benches for the Brown Schoolhouse Bridge and Ballard Trail
 - The Norwich Historical Society is the fiscal agent for this project. The contributions are complete. The bench is ordered. Placement near the Brown Schoolhouse Bridge will be determined before delivery.
 - Flanders reported that another bench is on offer from a Norwich citizen for the Ballard Trail.
10. Clarification of purchasing procedures: No new information has been received.
11. 2021 grants: funding signage and work at on the Ballard Trail is planned, as described in Item 6, with Williams to draft the grant in coordination with Hubbard and the town manager, deadline: April 15.
12. Planning for FY 2022-23 budget:
 - Trailhead parking
 - Repair and maintenance of the logging road on the Woody Adams tract.

Other

13. Items for May meeting—Krembs summarized the following topics:
 - a. Grant proposal: Trail information
 - b. Proposed 2021 trail work projects
 - Lower Ballard side-hill and gully crossings: Reconnaissance report.
 - Upper Ballard bank and gully crossings: Reconnaissance report.
 - c. Organizing for the “Kids’ Bridge”.
 - d. Word day: Upper Loveland Road.
14. Items for future meetings—Krembs summarized the following:
 - a. Developing a trails master plan, as required by the 2020 Norwich Town Plan.

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.