

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for July 2, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Steve Flanders, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Craig Layne, John McCormick, Bridge McDowell, Gerry Plummer, Cathie Redpath, Jonathan Smolin, Brie Swenson, Cody Williams

In a work session on June 5, volunteers for the committee built a new bog bridge near the Elm Street end of the Heyl Trail. The committee is very grateful to the Norwich Women's Club for a grant award to purchase the materials for that bog bridge.

Individuals with the committee have recently cleared woodfalls across the Blue Ribbon and Ballard Trails. Plans are to clear a remaining blockage on the Connector Trail between Parcel 5 and the Blue Ribbon Trail.

On Sunday July 12, volunteers are to meet at 8:00 AM in the Parcel 5 lot for a committee work session on the upper Ballard Trail to elevate an old bog bridge and replace its decking. A good turnout of participants will be very much welcomed, partly because of the quantity of materials to be hauled to the work site. As usual for current work sessions, masks and social distancing will be needed. Also, bring work gloves, drinking water, and insect repellent.

The committee plans to hold a work session on September 20 to redirect the water runoff onto the upper Ballard Trail from an abutting privately owned parcel..

Steve Flanders reviewed the organization of the Trails Committee which is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. David Hubbard, Craig Layne, and Cody Willisams are members of that subcommittee and attended this meeting. Most others attending were Trails Committee volunteers. Nick Krembs has outlined the organization of the Trails Committee and its volunteers in correspondence received by the Selectboard in the packet for their meeting on June 25. It is anticipated that Selectboard will discuss this topic at an upcoming meeting, perhaps later this month.

David Hubbard reviewed plans for repair of an eroded section along the lower Ballard Trail near Ballard Park. Materials, heavy machinery, and an operator could complete the repairs in one morning at a maximum cost of \$750. The Land Management Council has submitted a grant application requesting funds to support this project.

Steve Flanders reported that an ad hoc town committee selected a submission by Nick Fabricant as the best for both technical qualifications and cost among eight proposals received for construction of a replacement bridge on Brown Schoolhouse Road where it crosses Charles Brown Brook. The Selectboard subsequently authorized moving ahead with that project. Two grant applications for funds for the bridge are still under review. So far, \$3400 have been received in private donations to the town for that bridge, and it is hoped that additional such donations will be forthcoming through solicitations from this committee. Contributions are payable to the Town of Norwich and should be designated for use on the Brown Schoolhouse Road bridge replacement.

A communication on June 18 from Christopher Mattrick of the US Forest Service outlined conclusions from an evaluation of trails within the Norwich section of the Appalachian Trail Corridor. Final decisions about those trails are to come after a period for public comments. When the time comes for comments, it is the intent of this committee to publicize that opportunity for town residents. Those attending this meeting agreed by consensus to endorse a draft letter by Nick Krembs replying to Christopher Mattrick.

A Discover Norwich Trails walk was held for the public by the committee on June 27 at Parcel 5. Summaries with pictures of that event subsequently attracted numerous online viewers.

Craig Layne announced that a special feature of the Zoom meeting of the Conservation Commission on Tuesday July 21 will be a report on the recovery of Charles Brown Brook after removal of the dam.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark