

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for September 2, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Steve Flanders, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, Nick Krembs, Craig Layne, John McCormick, Gerry Plummer, Cody Williams

A quorum of the Norwich Conservation Commission Trails Subcommittee (Layne and Williams) attended so that the meeting constituted an official meeting of that body.

A trail work session led by Jim Faughnan on August 23 lengthened a bog bridge over a wet area on the upper Ballard Trail and replaced worn decking on the older part of that bog bridge.

Dates designated for upcoming trail work sessions are Sunday September 20, Sunday October 11, and Sunday October 25. One of the first two of these dates is to be for work on the Cossingham Road Farm Trails, but scheduling arrangements have not yet been completed. Details on plans for the trail work session on September 20 are to be provided in a later email.

Drainage improvements on the upper Ballard Trail are to be made during one of the upcoming work sessions. Additionally, it is planned to remove dozens of blue stones from the bed of Charles Brown Brook at Brown Schoolhouse Road after contractor work there is completed; wading will likely be required to remove those stones. The committee intends eventually to add plantings as part of revegetating in that vicinity, but the additional plantings are likely to be done in the spring when growing conditions will be favorable. A potential spring inauguration ceremony for the bridge was discussed.

It is planned to conduct an inventory of trail infrastructure, such as bog bridges, signage, and kiosks, with the intent of being able to anticipate well in advance the needs for replacements or additions and thus facilitate preparations for annual budgets. Infrastructure replacements and improvements on town lands would appropriately be covered by funding from the town budget, whereas grants from outside sources would be requested to cover such structures for trails on private lands. This infrastructure survey is to be discussed further at the October meeting.

A draft report on activities of the Norwich Trails Committee for the period from April through June was approved for transmission by Nick Krembs to the Conservation Commission which can use that information in reporting to the Selectboard.

Steve Flanders prepared a draft memo summarizing the administration of the Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) as a subcommittee of the Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) and including the role of volunteers with the NTC. This draft represents a potential basis for the NCC and Town Manager to agree upon roles for officially representing the Town of Norwich with respect to trails, especially in grant writing and purchasing goods and services.

A "Discover Norwich Trails" hike for the public on the upper Ballard Trail was, because of weather, delayed a day and held on August 30. Attention is being given to improving notification arrangements in the case of possible future postponements of hikes in this series. The next hike in the series on September 26 will be the longest for this year and cover a loop including the Cossingham Trail.

Thanks go to Craig Layne for hosting this Zoom meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark