

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for October 7, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskén, Steve Flanders, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, Nick Krembs, Sean Ogle, Justin Strauss, Brie Swenson, Cody Williams

The Norwich Trails Committee, a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, did not have a quorum for this meeting because Cody Williams was the only representative present. The meeting was therefore held as an informational discussion.

Since the September meeting, individual volunteers have cleared fallen trees by the new bridge on Brown Schoolhouse Road and on the Gile Mountain Trail.

Work sessions were held on September 12 and 20 to revegetate and prevent erosion around the new bridge. Grass seeding was done with mixtures lacking exotic seeds. Mats to prevent erosion were put into place. The grass was then subsequently watered and then sprouted successfully. Fallen leaves now cover that area. Funds for this work were provided by bridge contractor Nick Fabricant and by the Norwich Women's Club. Waivers from volunteers at those work sessions are to be placed in the Tracy Hall drop box to go to Recreation Director Brie Swenson.

October 3 was the last day of construction on the new bridge. In response to a grant application, the Byrne Foundation recently awarded \$10,000 towards the cost of constructing the new bridge.

Additional work is planned for the safety of handicapped users in the area of the bridge. It is proposed to place rounded boulders to prevent wheelchairs from rolling over the edge. Signage on the entry road is proposed to exclude all vehicles except those for handicapped individuals. Town officials are to be asked to determine whether an ordinance should be enacted to enforce restrictions on use of the entry road by vehicles other than those for handicapped persons. It was suggested that the road not be plowed in winter, partly because the bridge itself will not be cleared of snow.

Steve Flanders is to prepare a public notice for online distribution to indicate that the bridge is now open for public use. There is to be no formal opening for the bridge at this time, but it is hoped that a dedication or related event can be held later.

The Trails Committee and volunteers are to hold a work session on Sunday October 11 at the Cossingham Road Farm Trails. Participants are to meet at 8:30 AM in the parking area on Cossingham Road and should bring masks, work gloves, and drinking water. Activities are to include weed-wacking, trimming, and chain sawing.

On Sunday October 25, a work session is to be held to improve drainage across the upper Ballard Trail where water crosses from an adjacent parcel. Participants are to meet at 8:30 AM at Parcel 5 and should bring masks, work gloves, and drinking water.

Steve Flanders and Jim Faughnan plan during October to conduct a field survey of trail infrastructure which will help in estimating costs for future trail work.

At the October meeting of the Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC), Cody Williams is to raise the question whether one person from the NCC might be designated as the authorized representative of the town for those purchases and grant applications related to trails.

It is intended to designate a new scribe for the Trails Committee and volunteers. Nick Krembs will speak with others not at this meeting in determining an appropriate course of action

On September 26, the most recent in the Discover Norwich Trails series of hikes for the public was held over a four mile loop including the Cossingham Trail. The next hike in that series is to be held on October 31 at Brookmead in cooperation with the Upper Valley Land Trust which will be represented by Paul Blazeovich.

A possible continuation of the Discover Norwich Trails hikes in 2021 is to be discussed at a later meeting.

Inquiries are to be made about possibly naming the new mountain bike trail in Parcel 5.

On Saturday October 17 Sean Ogle of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance will be leading a group of volunteers in trail maintenance on the upper Ballard Trail.

The Gile Mountain Trail continues to be the most used of Norwich trails, with substantial numbers of visitors during the past month of September.

Thanks go to Brie Swenson for hosting this Zoom meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark