

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for November 4, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskens, Steve Flanders, Peter Griggs, Nick Krembs, Craig Layne, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Brie Swenson, Cody Williams

This was an official meeting of the Norwich Trails Committee with a quorum of Craig Layne and Cody Williams in attendance.

Since the October meeting, individual volunteers with the committee have cleared blockages on the Ballard, Gile Mountain, and King Arthur Trails as well as one previously reported for the Appalachian Trail.

A good turnout was reported for a trail work session at the Cossingham Road Farm Trails on October 11 when activities including moving gravel for a distant culvert and substantial cutting back of vegetation along trails.

An October 25th work session on the upper Ballard Trail involved clearing old ditches as well as new digging to redirect water flow which had been going across the trail.

Barriers around the small parking area at the new Brown School House Road bridge were discussed. It was suggested that an eventual arrangement of permanent barriers should ensure full protection of the bridge from the possibility of a runaway vehicle coming down the entrance ramp. It was also recommended that the heavy barriers now present be removed or replaced soon. Their current locations on slopes could result in their movement during the spring thaw and thus potentially damage the entry ramp and make retrieval difficult if they were to slide down the embankment. A planned memo from the Trails Committee to the Town Manager is to offer suggestions about the barriers.

Ditches and water bars along the Gile Mountain Trail have not yet this fall been cleared of fallen leaves and other debris. It is anticipated that a small group of volunteers will complete that work during the next several days.

A badly deteriorated 20 foot long bridge on the lower Ballard Trail, near the A-frame bridge, needs replacement. If materials can be purchased and prepared soon, it might be possible to complete that bridge replacement this month, but otherwise in the spring.

Materials would be hauled to the site via Brown School House Road. The project might be jointly conducted by volunteers from the Trails Committee and others led by Sean Ogle of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. Email announcements are to be sent to potential volunteers with the Trails Committee if this project can be completed soon.

Steve Flanders discussed the recent inventory of trails infrastructure. This inventory has been used as the basis for a memo to be sent from the Trails Committee for the Town Manager and Selectboard to demonstrate the detailed planning underlying the request for funding for trails in the next town budget.

Steve Flanders has volunteered to become the new scribe for meetings of the Trails Committee and volunteers. There is to be a gradual transition as he takes on that new role. Nick Krembs expressed the gratitude of the Trails Committee and its volunteers for the past service of the outgoing scribe.

A training program on Zoom for the Open Meeting Law is to be offered for members of town committees, boards, and volunteers on November 17. Among those to be attending that meeting are David Hubbard, Craig Layne, Cody Williams, and Nick Krembs.

Cody Williams, Steve Flanders, and Gerry Plummer are to continue discussions about online communications including storage and access for electronic records.

The last of this year's Discover Norwich Trails hikes for the public was held on October 31 at Brookmead in cooperation with the Upper Valley Land Trust which was represented by Paul Blazeovich. More details can be found on the Norwich Trails website.

A continuation of hikes for the public is planned for 2021 in cooperation with the Recreation Department. Steve Flanders and Brie Swenson are to discuss possible arrangements for hikes for the public in the coming year.

Brie Swenson reported that permitting discussions are now underway for the Huntley Meadow bridge which will substitute for a former bridge which crossed Blood Brook in that vicinity. Volunteers of the Trails Committee have agreed to assemble that bridge in the spring of 2021.

Special thanks go to Brie Swenson for serving as the Zoom Host for this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark