

Draft Minutes of Town Forest Committee meeting, April 16, 2015, Story
Memorial Hall

Members in attendance: Rudy Gross, Dennis Lemire, Laura Stillson, Cathy Boedtker and Jim Lyall

Public Attendees: Dick Beatty and Laura Paige

1. Meeting called to order: 6:33 p.m.
2. No changes or additions.
3. Minutes from the previous two meetings were read, moved and seconded for approval. Dennis stated that he could not approve the minutes because they are incomplete, missing detail of the discussion of Glenn Seward being on the conservation easement committee. Rudy agreed. Jim said that off-agenda discussion is generally not in the minutes, but that recordings of the full meetings are given to Martha Harrison. The minutes were approved with ayes: Laura, Cathy and Jim; nays: Dennis and Rudy.

4. Public comment: Dick Beatty said that as Select Board Chair, he was attending meetings of all the committees to learn more about their proceedings.

5. Trail Report:

Trails have been closed for mud season 10 signs have been posted, plus posting online at websites and social media. They will be opened progressively. Trails have also been posted on Trail Hub.com, where people can find trail conditions.

Shelley Seward asked Jim to close the trails on their land. They walked the boundaries to determine trails involved. Critical sections of Home Again and Last Mile are effected as well as losing Home Again. Reroutes have been scoped out for Last Mile on resort property (fairly easy) and the northeast, twisty section of Home Again on greenbelt (difficult), but the main connection on the east side of the stream is lost. The only connections between the resort and the existing town forest are now Last Mile and Mile-Long-Field, on property that MFW will not be selling to the town.

New maps are at the printer and an abbreviated version will be part of a Vermont Mountain Bike Association map of 12 mountain biking venues in Vermont that will be promoted and sold by the state tourism board. Rudy suggested that the town needs to get a signed agreement with land owners, preferably an easement. Before next meeting we will determine all the property owners and discuss this further. The town has an annual agreement with STAB, MFW and OLC.

Jim reported that STAB received a VMBA grant for about \$700 for bridge materials. The Edge Fitness Center has been promoting a community trail clean-up day with STAB on April 25th.

6. Update on acquisition of resort property:

Laura reported that she informed Glenn about the committee's concerns with his working with the easement committee after the select board had agreed that no SB member would be on it. He came to the first meeting of the committee and announced that he would not be a part of the committee and then left.

In response to a question from Dennis, Dick said that at this time, the select board was not working on the formation of a non-profit to manage recreation in the expanded town forest. Jim said that he had been in contact with Brian Quirk, Ascutney Property Owners Association president, and that they would meet soon to discuss possibilities for forming a non-profit. Jim told him that STAB would like to partner with a non-profit to manage the biking/hiking, but that a ski area was beyond the scope of their mission. Several TFC members remarked that there seemed to be a lot of interest in the ski area resurrection within the POA and that the town could benefit greatly from their participation in the endeavor.

The private fund-raising for the acquisition is at about 50% of goal. TPL is setting up a website to make it easy to donate. Laura will be working on local fund-raising.

The easement committee will be meeting next week, working on UVLT's draft conservation easement document to be distributed to TFC members before the next meeting.

Laura reported that TPL had found a grant opportunity that may be able to provide funds for some projects after the acquisition. She will provide more information at our next meeting.

7. Other business:

Cathy said that she will get an update on the status of the RTP grant from Sherrie Winnie and the Act 250 status from Martha. Laura said that we are looking into getting a couple of trail counters from SWRPC to get some data on trail use

8. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Lyall, TFC Secretary