

Minutes of Town Forest Committee meeting March 7, 2013, Story Memorial Hall

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

Public Attendees: Geoff Sykes, Tim Stone, Ryan Hammond, Terri Calhoun, Dick Webster, Marcella Barrows, Robert Barrows, Frank Brock, Jerry Ouelette, Shirley Ouelette, Tammy Conley, B. Young, Betty Lemire, Allison Pearsons and Jeff Pearsons.

Meeting called to order: 6:35 p.m.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Proposed snowmobile trail to Kimball Farm Road. Several members of the board walked a proposed re-route of the snowmobile trail last week. Instead of meeting Kimball Farm Rd. opposite Steinberg's driveway, it would start up Southern Belle, then head west along the stone wall/property line and join the class 4 extension of KFR just north of the intersection with Ridgeback Trail. Jim Lyall asked to see the proposed route to be sure there is no conflict with the newly built New Belle Trail. Two select board members also walked the route.

Cathy said that the initial reason for allowing snowmobiles in the TF was to make a connection to the resort. She asked if the purpose had changed. Dennis said that there was a need for a place that townspeople could park to gain access to the Snowmobile trails, and that the TF parking lot would fill that need. There is currently no interest access from Orange Lakes, and there are concerns about liability and noise. The POA is interested in having the access. Dennis said that Glenn is conferencing with OL higher management and will see if there is any interest from their point of view and that based on the current uncertainty with them and Snowdance, we should table consideration of the resort connection.

Jeff Pearsons said that it is good to move forward with TF parking lot to KFR connection, because we would be that much closer to a connection with the resort at some future date.

Act250 - the use of ATVs in the town forest.

Dennis read a letter from Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Steinberg in favor of use of the TF double-track trails for dirt bikes and ATV's, as they have done since 1972. He said that all trail users need to be educated about when they should stay off the trails and reduce the erosion possibilities.

Geoff Sykes says there is room for all users up there. There is a need for control, but there should be allowance for responsible users.

Laura pointed out that we need to get Act250 approval because a local citizen went to the state asking that the trail system be reviewed.

Jim pointed out that most of the double-track trails are too steep for biking and hiking,

let alone motorized vehicles, so there is actually very little trailage that might be approved.

Dennis also said that the original Act250 permit did not include motorized vehicles because the district co-ordinator said that it would take longer.

Several attendees said that ATV's don't necessarily tear up the trails - it's how they are used.

Jim pointed out the need for an organization to take responsibility for the use, abuse, etc. The attendees and Dennis responded that if Act250 asks for a responsible organization, they are ready to organize.

Rudy said that ATV's were very low priority on the survey of town, so we would need to bring it before the public again. Attendance tonight indicates that there is strong interest even if it may not be a majority. Dennis pointed out that the survey was to guide us in usage priorities, not what was or was not to be permitted, and that minority uses also need to be considered.

Dennis moved that "the Town Forest Committee charge the Select board with attaining an act 250 amendment to allow ATV use in the town forest." Discussion followed a second:

Frank Brock suggested that snowmobiles be included. Dennis said let's stick to ATV's - we have a network of snowmobile trails on private land. He can't go to the owners and ask to add ATV's, but public land is a place that ATV use is appropriate. Cathy said that ATV's and snowmobiles have different issues in terms of erosion and season of use. A snowmobile trail to the resort was considered by the select board, but was turned down by resort owners.

Dennis read from minutes of the April, 2012 meeting, when Glenn stated that if there was demand for ATV's we need to address it.

Many of the trails are available for emergency use only.

The motion was passed 4 to 1.

Bicentennial Trail Update

The new route needs to be GPS'd and mapped as soon as snow disappears.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Lyall, TFC Secretary