

Draft Minutes of Town Forest Committee meeting, November 5, 2015, Story
Memorial Hall

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

Public Attendees: Tom Kenyon

1. Meeting called to order: 6:37 p.m.
2. Changes or additions: none
3. Minutes from the previous meeting were tabled due to incorrect warning.
4. Public comment: None
5. Trail Report: Jim said that the trails suffered no damage from the VT50. Volunteer work days were spent on building a reroute of Last Mile (near Sluice) around Glenn Seward's land, and rerouting Nimbus as part of the RTP grant. He said that because we didn't get Act250 approval to start the trail until mid/late summer, there is more to be built next year to satisfy the grant. There may still be questions about requirements for an archaeological study. Jim will find out who did the study for the STAB's State Park trails and told us that there was no need to inspect sites on the side of the mountain.
6. Laura announced that the town was being honored with a state Town Forest Centennial Award for the being the model town forest in Windsor County. She thanked the committee for all the work that made it possible.
7. Update of proposed easement for Town Forest and ski area property: Laura reviewed the changes in the final draft, which followed suggestions from the VHCB (who is providing a large grant for the acquisition.) The only significant changes were additions that allowed for a small community ski lodge, overflow parking and other uses in the multi-use area, such as ziplines.
8. Ski Area acquisition and Mt. Ascutney Outdoors updates: The closing is scheduled for December 15th. Mt. Ascutney Outdoors, Inc. is in the process of raising \$30,000 to fund the initial phase of operation as the town forest recreation developer and manager, half of which would go toward insurance. Construction of the rope tow is well underway, thanks to many generous donations of materials, labor and equipment. A major fund drive for further development (chairlift, groomer, warming hut, etc.) would be started next spring. If for some reason MAO, inc. should be unable to keep the skiing, biking etc. financially viable in the future, the remaining assets would revert to the town.
9. Role of Town Forest Committee post acquisition. Tom Kenyon said that he thought that the committee should be reduced to three members.

Dennis and Rudy expressed the need to keep it at 5 members. Laura said that establishing and monitoring the Community Forest Management Plan as well as monitoring compliance with the easements was going to require a lot of work. Although the CFMP has not been finished yet, initial drafts were well over 100 pages. She gave us an initial list of what may be involved to read and discuss at the next meeting. As board members of Mt. Ascutney Outdoors, Laura and Jim said that they would have conflicts of interest, and would have to step down from the TFC following the acquisition.

10. Budget: We have insufficient information to determine our budget. Laura will ask the SB about the status of surveying costs and acquisition funds that may be taken from the TFC budget.

Jim said that next year, MAO and/or STAB will be handling the trail construction/maintenance costs without help from the town. But the \$4,300 RTP grant is to the town not other entities, so we may want to provide for the town to pay for about \$2,000 of trail work, in order to get paid back, plus, once the project is completed next year. The 2016 budget will be established at our next meeting.

11. Other business: None

12. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Lyall, TFC Secretary