

Friends of North Andover Trails

Meeting Minutes – 19 October 2017

6.05 PM – 7.15 PM

Attendance: 7 people participating (Glen, Steve, Tom, Helena, Liz, Rob and Jim)

Membership: One (1) new member, on-line, and two (2) renewals. Monthly walks continue to be a good source of new members. Last walk, Rob focused on attracting new members.

Treasury Report: Steve reported a healthy bank balance: \$17,562 cash on-hand. Not many expenses, minor materials and repairs to trail equipment. Most revenue is coming from Trail Guide sales. P/L attached.

Guidebooks: Sold 17 Trail Guides at the September Fall Festival. Current sales locations are being prompted for payments; some appear past due. In discussing 2018 goals, it was agreed that we would create a 2nd edition; new trails, re-opening others, etc. timing is right for an updated version.

Reports from the Trails: Two (2) trail reports received: James Swamp and Mazurenko Farms. Jim wanted to get a copy of his trail reports expressed; not easy now, only an email. Rob will forward the email back to those submitting, saying thanks for the report and giving them a copy.

Several people have attempted to walk the BCT between the new Farnum boardwalk and Rte 114/Berry Street parking and were stopped by the stone wall. It's overgrown, wet and very welcoming. Replacing the stone wall walk with a safer boardwalk will be a 2018 priority. Tom expressed concern that since we would be really creating a new trail (removing trees, etc.), it would be hard to get conservation permission. Both Liz and Rob thought we would be able to get conservation commission approval, but might be something more than an RDA. At least we should find out what was required.

Someone is mowing a trail on Fosters Farm town property. An abutter is concerned that this new trail is crossing onto their property. Glen is going to walk this trail with the conservation agent this week to define town /private property boundaries. Others interested are invited to join.

Other Events Recap:

- **Leonhard Farm Trail Hike:** Joint with Greenbelt, about 35 people attended, including 3 families with very young children, and one of the owners. Glen did a great job providing anecdotes to increase the time for what is a relatively short walk. Took a "bushwhack" to the swamp area – well received by the group.
- **Ward Reservation Hike:** About 28 people participated, including 3 families with elementary school aged children and 4 dogs. Started at Brightview trailhead and walked to Boston Hill and then on to Mars Swamp area to see a heron rookery. New hike this year. Very positive feedback.

- **Fall Festival:** Glen carried almost all of the burden for this event. Mike helped set-up and Helena was there for a few hours, but some more help might have been good. Many Trail Guides sold; new member possibilities. Overall, a good event for FONAT.

Updates on On-Going Projects:

- **Farnum Boardwalk Project:** Received a donation from Jackson Lumber for all materials needed to finish the toe-kick and an expanded turn area. Steve will be picking up the materials this week. No information on when boardwalk work will be done. The re-start of the debate about a railing system was stopped since we have had extensive debates in past meetings. It can always be added later.
- **Smolak Farm Trail:** Tom met with Michael Smolak to discuss next steps for creating this new trail. Next meeting will be with above two (2) and the NAHS track coach to see if the track team would be willing to help clear out the trail area. Seems to be a lot of work needed.
- **Lake Trail Boardwalk Project:** No progress made. No time limit on CPA funds that have been allocated to this project. Next spring/summer project at best.
- **FOHP “NA33-NA32” Boardwalk Project:** Rob secured conservation commission approval in October to build a 40-ft boardwalk in HPSF. Project is joint with NEMBA. They are looking for a contribution of materials from Home Depot (same source of donated materials for the new kiosk).

New Business/Discussion:

- **Half Mile Hill Chairs:** Current Adirondack chairs are in poor condition and need to be replaced. There is a plaque on the existing chairs. Town property. Composite material instead of wood was thought best. After a short discussion, we approved use of FONAT funds to replace these chairs. Glen will find out how to get town's agreement.
- **SCA Ideas for 2018:** No real good projects on the DCR property. DCR will be applying but for 2 boardwalks in Boxford/BSF.
- **Review of 2017 Goals. 2018 Ideas:** Reviewed the 2017 Goals; status appended. Key projects completed or progressed. Highest priority of the 2018 Goals will be finishing up 2017 boardwalk projects before initiating any new boardwalk projects. First draft 2018 Goals, including 2017 carry/over items, appended.

Next Meeting: 15 November 2017 at 1 Johnson Street

Friends of North Andover Trails – 2017 Goals

Status: October 2017

Trail Stewardship

- Continue to support and expand the “Adopt a Trail Program”. **More participants, but still not robust.**
- Continue to expand “construction group” for RDA’s, design, construction, etc. **Excellent improvement – now a working group – 3 boardwalks built in 2017.**
- Make input into all Eagle Scout projects “automatic” (Foxwood Drive). **Conservation Commission is pulling back completely. All projects now starting with a FONAT review.**

Land Stewardship

- Advocate for the town acquisition of the “unowned area” near the Lost 50. **No real progress. Other options besides leaving it with conservation agent identified.**

New Trails

- Support Greenbelt – Leonhard Farm Trail and new trailhead area. **DONE.**
- Add two (2) loop trails to the Bruin Hills area, jointly with Greenbelt. **No Progress.**

Trail Improvements

- Obtain approvals and construct 2 boardwalks on the BCT/Middleton re-route: Wilmot, BSF using Field Pond Grant funds. **One constructed – Wilmot property.**
- Obtain local approvals and support construction of the boardwalk on DCR – Farnum property using SCA grant funds and AmeriCorps crew. **DONE.**
- Design, construct and install new signs on town trail areas and the BCT. **Prototypes agreed, but no trail signs installed.**
- Obtain CPA funds and construct boardwalks on the new Edgewood – area Trail. **CPA funds obtained.**
- Obtain local approvals to construct a boardwalk on the Carter Hill – Highland Trail, using existing wood. **DONE.**
- Advocate for a new parking area at Rolling Ridge. **No Progress.**

Friends of North Andover Trails – 2017 Goals

Status: October 2017

(continued)

Active Outreach

- Expand the current number of co-leaders for the monthly walks. **One new leader added; one more additional leader identified.**
- Bring back the nature walks. **No Progress.**

Passive Outreach

- Progress the 2nd edition of the guidebook. **Maps are being prepared**

Friends of North Andover Trails – 2018 Goals
(First Draft: October 2017)

Carry-Over 2017 Goals (with Membership Growth as a Priority):

- Continue to support and expand the “Adopt a Trail Program”. (RJ)
- Expand the number of Leaders and Co-leaders for the monthly walks (Leaders)
- Finish the Farnum boardwalk using Cell Technology grant, including information stand(s). (LA/Construction Group)
- Complete 2nd boardwalk on the BCT/Middleton re-route in BSF, using Field Pond grant. (MA/Construction Group)
- Construct and install new signs on town trail areas and eventually the BCT. (SL)
- Secure approvals and construct bog bridges on the new Edgewood – Lake Trail. (GA/Construction Group)
- Progress the 2nd edition of the guidebook. (GA)
- Advocate for the town acquisition of the “unowned area” near the Lost 50. (LA)
- Add two (2) loop trails to the Bruin Hills area, jointly with Greenbelt. (RJ)
- Advocate for a new parking area at Rolling Ridge. (?)
- Bring back nature walks. (GA)

New 2018 Project Goals:

- Secure 501c3 status if North Andover Improvement Society ceases to exist. (GA)
- Replace the stone wall walk on BCT near Berry St. parking area with a new trail/boardwalk. (LA)
- Resurrect the Town Farm Trails, including adding a small boardwalk. (RJ)
- Define what is needed at Wind Rush Farms/trails. (??)