

LAND STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE
Town Hall Chambers – 8 Newmarket Road
Meeting Minutes for September 11, 2024

Members Attending: Ann Welsh, Gale Carey, Neil Slepian, Darrell Ford, Myrta Janosz, Carolyn Singer and Marty Gorham.

Absent: Ted Howard, John Carroll, Larry Brickner-Wood, and John Nachilly.

Also attending: Sara Callaghan and Todd Selig.

1. The Meeting was called to order at 8:32am by Ann Welsh.
2. The meeting agenda was approved.
3. The minutes for the August 14, 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved with two abstentions.
4. Land Stewardship Coordinator Sara Callaghan Updates.

Longmarsh Preserve

Members discussed improving the water crossing where the Longmarsh Preserve Trail connects to the northern end of the Sweet Trail. One option is to install stepping stones within the waterway on each side of the existing stone bridge at a cost of \$1,400. A second option is to design and construct a bridge, north of the stone bridge, using pressure treated lumber at an approximate costs of \$10,000. The members voted 6 for, 1 against, to recommend constructing the new bridge. An approval by the Conservation Commission is required for this to proceed.

The members discussed an inquiry from UNH Associate Dean Anton Bekkerman who is looking for a 5 acre parcel of land for an experimental agricultural project. The members suggested asking Professor Bekkerman look at the Thompson Forest, the Oyster River Forest, and perhaps Wagon Hill Farm and determine if any of these properties might be suitable. At the same time, the Town needs to review whether there are restrictions on these properties that prohibit the proposed use.

On 7/17/2019, the Town entered into an agreement with the NH Fish and Game Department to allow the Town to construct a foot bridge across LaRoche Brook that spans bank to bank, meets DES wetland permitting requirements and is suitable to NH Fish & Game. However, the Town has not yet constructed the bridge and needs to renew the trail construction and maintenance agreement to allow the bridge construction to proceed. Darrell Ford and Marty Gorham agreed to try to help John Nachilly expedite the bridge construction.

Sara stated that encroachment by abutters onto town property has been observed at Jackson's Landing and Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary. Stake and Stones Land Surveying, LLC is planning to locate and document these property boundaries within the next few months. The abutters will be notified that a surveyor will be working in these areas.

Sara has accepted a position with the UNH Cooperative Extension starting at the end of September and will be leaving the position of Land Stewardship Coordinator.

5. The Town will work to recruit and hire a new Land Stewardship Coordinator for the part time position.

6. The members voted to approve the nomination of Sara Callaghan an alternate LSSC member. Ann will present this nomination to the Conservation Commission for their consideration.

7. Reports from Committees

Conservation Commission

Neil Slepian stated that the CC is working to finalize the updated ordinance for the wetland/shoreland overlay district. The commission is working to agree on a buffer zone width and to perhaps make an allowance for a conditional use permit for encroachment into the buffer.

The commission accepted the proposal from Enock Glidden to provide a trail accessibility assessment for some of the trail areas at Wagon Hill Farm, Jackson's Landing, Oyster River Forest and Thompson Forest.

Recreation

Discover Durham's Trails first event will be at Longmarsh Preserve on Sunday September 15th.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 8:30 am in the Town Hall Chambers.