

APPROVED AS WRITTEN 2/14/2019 PC

Southbridge Trail Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2019
Town Hall Petrelli Room

Meeting called to order at 6:37pm

Attendance: Paul Van Camp; Ken Pickren; Kevin Buxton; Pat Charron

Absent: Bryan Wilson Guest: Scott Benoit

Motion to accept the December minutes was made by Kevin, second by Paul.
Motion passed unanimously.

Ongoing Business

It was noted that other committees have alternative (associate) members if established by charter change; it is believed that such a charter change involves a sub-committee and three readings at Town Council meeting.

We'd like a committee of five plus three alternates/associate. .Kevin will look into. Ken will make contact with Bryan. Ray Arnold not interviewed by Town Manager because there is not an opening.

An email was received from Dick Whitney, his son-in-law is interested in helping with clean-ups/clear brush as needed but not in attending meeting.

Paul would like to step down as committee chair. As Ken was previous chair as well as on Conservation Committee and Kevin and Pat would prefer not to chair, Paul suggested the position be rotated among the four of us. Pat pointed out that this would work as long as communication is open and continuous between meetings so that meeting leaders are up-to-date for each meeting. Paul noted that he will be traveling or away several times in the coming year. He plans to stay an active part of the committee but feels that his absences would not be fair to rest of group.

Consistently being down one member doesn't help our situation.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that Paul would stay on as chair and we would establish a schedule with a designated substitute chair for the months that Paul will be unavailable. With the advanced planning, this should work ok.

Starting with February, meetings will be every other month.

Current Business

Kevin has spoken to Suzie (Geers, new Recreation Director) about the trails. He will contact her again with some advertising options.

It was determined that Mark Soper has not done any work on at McKinstry Brook. Brief discussion on what and if we should try to clear some of the tornado blow-down.

It was noted that Fish & Game does not want us on their property.

Mass Trail grant status: (section 2 of QVRT)

Town Manager feels that grant should not be submitted because Heather is too busy to deal with this.

It has been suggested that we work from the bottom up.

Ken walked area with Pete from Berton Engineering. Ken also walked with Dave Adams of the Planning and Development sub-committee and plans are in the works for Ken to do a power point presentation to that sub-committee.

Ken parked in the empty lot on Morris Street that abuts the tracks. It is believed this lot is owned by Roderick Murphy. It was noted that there could be issues with the various property owners.

Ken informed us of several things he found out about chemicals and such, that we'd be dealing with, based on a call for info to the DPW.

Alot of small discussions related to different aspects of the grant, including: RFP is Request for Proposal; Scope of Service is needed. Time is proving to be a be a restraint for us. Free cash for 20% guarantee needed as part of grant would not even be approved until March.

Additional information that has been research: RR ties cannot be crushed or ground. Possibly could be burned. We would need definitive letter from DEP to be able to do anything with ties. There may be a company in Millbury to contact about ties.

Kevin contacted Rail Works out of Westfield, they dismantle railroad beds for trails.

With grant's February 1 deadline fast approaching we talked about feasibility of continuing to pursue for this year; this project, any project, is not easy; many issues with state, owners, contamination etc. It's complicated and involved and we should give ourselves the time to properly do our homework and work towards submitting a suitable application in 2020.

Ken's presentation with Planning and Development would be a good start for town awareness. There are many things involved that we need to address and/or research to include maintenance once a trail is established. We need comprehensive plan with community support.

The meeting with P&D will take place at the town hall on January 15th at 5:30 pm

QVRT erosion

Paul spoke with Joe Cone, engineer hired by DPW for erosion control project, and had discouraging news that project is not progressing. We are awaiting word from Matt; the deadline will probably be extended.

No success with permit/lease from Chalita, State Director of RR properties. Talked of possible meeting with her.

Story Walk

Paul did a Story Walk presentation to the Library Board of Directors. They like the concept and would be willing to donate but do not wish to be involved in maintaining or book changing.

Maybe establish a "Friends of Heritage Story Walk" group to check and maintain on a regular basis. Our next step would be to go to school for their input/involvement.

One of the concerns with getting this project going is being able to dig 2' holes for the station posts. Again, discussed mounting options for book stand placement.

Next meeting is February 14 at 6:30 pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

submitted by P. Charron

2/11/19