

Cabot Trails Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2019

Members Present: Andy Gilbert, Paul Wade, Kris Schmitt, Michael Socks, Dana Glazier, Gary Gulka  
Members of Public Present: Fred Jaegels, Amy Hornblas, Laura Smith, Rick Smith

Next Meeting: August 28, 7 pm

Changes to the agenda: eliminate item 7 (coordinating email/interest lists) and adding Fourth of July summary

Minutes of July 10 approved without changes

Public Comment

Laura and Rick Smith, landowners on Wheeler Road, expressed concerns about public trails on private land and indicated that they did not want any trails on their land. They also expressed concern that Wheeler Road, a Class IV road, gets abused by some of the public that accesses it (trash, drugs, drinking, trespassing, etc.) and that additional public access by trails will make the situation worse. Attracting tourism and outsiders to use trails can aggravate undesirable/illegal activities on and around private property. Concern was raised about trails crossing deer wintering areas. There was mention of other landowners in area that do not want to see any public access. Town roads should be used in many areas for trails since they are already public - example of this is Thistle Hill Road.

Andy explained that no public trails will be developed without landowner permission for access and guidelines and any restrictions for use. Work of the committee thus far has been to seek public input on where residents would like to see trails. Maps generated thus far have shown general areas of interest for trails, and it has been explained at public meetings and in written articles that this is the case and that landowner permission is a prerequisite. Some landowners have expressed an interest in having public trails that cross their land; others have said no to access, but there hasn't been an effort yet at this stage to reach out to all landowners - because the first step has been to identify general areas of interest for trails. Andy explained that there will be a future meetings focusing on landowner engagement/concerns/interests in a public trail network.

Andy also said that he has opposed eliminating/throwing up Class IV roads and legal trails because historical public access, once gone, is gone forever. Other options may be available, such as turning a Class IV road into a legal trail and restricting use. There was also a discussion about gates and bars.

Question asked about the expense to build and maintain trails and who will pay for this. Andy indicated that all trail work would be done through volunteers and that there are residents interested in volunteering for this.

Question asked amount of the municipal planning grant. The amount of the grant is about \$20,000, most of which will be paid to the contractor, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

The committee also indicated that it appreciates and is listening to public concerns and that is approaching trails in a thorough, systematic and transparent manner through the municipal planning grant.

#### Fourth of July Report

Committee members marched in the parade with banner. Raffle tickets sold for a trails book and we netted \$12 to be deposited with the Town Clerk. There was fairly good traffic at the table on the green where we had three maps on display. The banner was printed at Staples at a cost of \$40.59. It was moved and approved that this expense would be submitted to the Town Clerk for reimbursement out of the Trails Committee budget.

Andy will check with the Town Clerk on funds still remaining in this year's budget.

#### Status of Municipal Planning Grant Project

Andy conveyed the following from Dan Currier of CVRPC on grant status:

We are about a 1/3 of the way through the project and are on track. Here is the next two months' worth of work.

#### July

1) Complete draft of existing conditions (this draft will be ready for review at the end of July and will include all of the work and maps that have been created so far).

#### August

- 1) Start working on developing two potential trail corridors alignment scenario (not due till December but is something we need to start on)
- 2) Develop a list of land owners to outreach to for landowner meeting (I will bring a laptop with parcel data on it to the next meet so we can start identifying parcels)
- 3) Start developing the materials needed for land owner outreach meeting (this will include but is not limited to the landowner permission forms, trail building permission forms, maintenance agreements and erosion control plans.) Would it be helpful to have someone come in and talk with the group about this? I was thinking Greg from Cross VT Trail.
- 4) Set date and time for land owner outreach meeting.

Not all of this needs to occur at the August meeting.

#### East Montpelier Trails Report

Fred reported out on a phone discussion he had with Nona Estrin of the East Montpelier Trails Association. Web site is [www.emtrails.org](http://www.emtrails.org). The association is a non-profit that formed several decades ago. Initially large farm owners were contacted for participation in a trails network. Permanent easements were established with these land owners and funding from the Freeman Foundation (no longer in existence) was used to some extent for

start-up. It was not clear from the discussion whether these easements were purchased. More recently they have relied on renewable annual landowner permission forms using a Vermont Land Trust agreement as the basis.

Landowner agreements were developed following a Vermont Land Trust easement agreement. She recommended as a starting point to talk to landowners first. She also said that VAST trails should be looked at. They have a landowner appreciation day. She said to contact Rick Hopkins who is on the board (229-4375) and he can be used as a resource and to possibly attend a meeting to talk about the East Montpelier experience.

### Field Trips

It was agreed that committee members would try to take a few field trips prior to next meeting, which may include the Cabot Winter Trail and lands around the Larsen's in the northwest corner of town.