

Cabot Trails Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
November 9, 2022

Members Present: Dana Glazier, Kris Schmitt, Gary Gulka, Monique Gerbex, Chuck Talbert, Michael Socks, Paul Wade

Next Meeting: **December 14**

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of October 12 approved without changes

Public Comment

None

Administrative Matters

No expenditures since last meeting.

Volunteer hours for the month:

Kris – 26

Dana – 5

Chuck – 7

Monique – 24.5

Paul – 5

Gary – 22

Michael – 10

Trails Update

The following To Do List was reviewed:

Grant-Related

- Finalize grant agreement – November; **we have been granted extension to Dec. 12**
- Tool and equipment purchase – mostly complete until spring
- Langone Trail – Redo gpx and map; make benches; discuss scenic overlook area with landowner; possible kiosk
- Old Center of Town Trail – discuss next steps
- Parking improvements at Elm St, Town Forest, and Old Center/Langone- prepare bid materials (spring)
- Establish trail steward program and trail monitoring/trail usage
- Contact grant project team and schedule first meeting – on hold until grant is finalized
- Order fencing materials for Burt Orchard's trail – get new materials list and cost estimates on revised trail configuration; redo gpx files if necessary
- Advertise for grant administrative assistant – on hold until we receive grant and review budget
- Game of Logging Chainsaw Training – on hold until spring; **has been scheduled for Dec 15-16 and four of us are signed up**
- Explore village kiosk location and design – on hold

Non-Grant Related

- Work on connecting trails from Talbert's to Cross VT Trail – meet with Ouweleen and other landowners; **Kris trying to arrange meeting date**; establish route through Voigt property and map; **we will walk the Voigt property on Nov. 13**
- Complete loop trails in Town Forest; create gpx files for trail network; develop map
- McQueeney trail repairs – on hold until we look at drainage in the spring. Also road erosion near parking area needs a fix.
- McQueeney Trails – install metal locking gate at Trautz end
- Connect Dubray to Cabot Plains to McQueeney – signage
- Kiosk advertising/sponsorship – on hold
- Monthly Chronicle articles;
- Continue to evaluate plowing and mowing needs
- Meet with Ian Ackermann for connection to Burt's – on hold
- LVRT grant application submitted; attend meetings; SB appointment to LVRT regional council
- Liability issues/volunteer service agreement – work on language for committee members, volunteers and landowners
- Kiosk at Dubray Rd
- Determine if trail near Rec Field to Burt's is possible (starting on DiStefano property on South Walden Rd)

#### Priorities for Trail Work

**Walk Voigt trail to review possible routes this coming Sunday**

**Meet with Ouweleen to discuss trail route**

**Create map of Town Forest trails; explore other trails in vicinity of Town Forest**

**Get new quote on Burt trail materials; create map of revised trail**

**Chuck will check with Don Mitchell about plowing at Elm St. Cemetery**

**Resolve issues as needed with Old Center trail**

**Chainsaw training – Dec. 15-16; four committee members are signed up**

**Demo of DR Power brush mower this coming Sunday**

#### Grants Update

**Recreational Trails Grant – We have an extension until Dec. 12 to respond to VT Forests, Parks, & Rec on to their questions. We will also be making budget revisions.**

LVRT Grant – The six towns between St. J and Hardwick applied for an \$80,000 grant to create an amenities plant for the LVRT that will address trailhead parking options, pause places, restrooms, trail crossing safety, and making connections to village centers, and making connections to spur trails. There is a good possibility that the project will be funded.

Northern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) is completing a LVRT trail usage and economic impact analysis with a consultant. **Gary said he will share that study when finalized soon.**

#### Public Outreach

**Consider drafting an article for December issue of Cabot Chronicle.**

#### Update on Liability Issues

Dana, Kris, and Gary met with Vermont League of Cities and Towns to discuss liability and insurance. The takeaways from this document: tasks and duties of volunteers should be clearly defined; training and

supervision and a safety checklist should be provided, including how to report an accident; and a Volunteer Service Agreement should be signed by Trails Committee members, volunteers, and landowners involved in the trail network.

#### Volunteer Service Agreement

- It is important for Trail Committee members, volunteers, and landowners to sign a Volunteer Service Agreement. This will assure that they are documented as volunteers working on behalf of the municipality and eligible for accident policy coverage of \$50,000. For landowners, coverage only applies to activities on their property directly related to trails.
- For individuals under 18 years of age serving as volunteers, there are many more issues and concerns, such as background checks for adults supervising them. Will want to check with town attorney on the details of any agreement involving individuals under 18.
- Accident Policy is a no-fault policy. If a volunteer is injured performing prescribed volunteer duties, they wouldn't be denied benefits by signing this form. Accident Policy is primary, over personal insurance,
- We may wish to add clarification in the agreement on the specifics of the accident policy coverage, since it is an entitlement not clear in the model.
- We are free to modify the model Volunteer Service Agreement, and it is suggested that we send it to Vicky for review.
- The service agreements should be kept on file and periodically reviewed and modified as necessary but do not need to have an expiration date.
- The Town also has general liability coverage in the amount of \$10 million that would apply in the event of property damage or an volunteer suing the town for something like failing to be properly trained.

VLCT strongly advised against paying an individual landowner to maintain trails. It could become a worker's compensation issue. It may be acceptable to compensate a landowner for purchase of gas to operate a mower, with a proper receipt. Any labor should be done under contract.

The use of school students under 18 years of age – this should be on hold. We will need to find out more about Cabot School's liability coverage and requirements, including background checks. Using volunteers under 18 would require a different agreement and town attorney review. **We will contact the school to find out more information.**

**We will work this winter season on tailoring the Volunteer Service Agreement to our needs, issues, and concerns, to be ready this spring to utilize the forms.**

#### Trail Apps and Maps

Chuck did some checking into trail apps. TrailFinder, managed, by VT Dept. of Forests, Parks, and Recreation is comprehensive in cataloguing Vermont trails, but it is not an app. The trails app that comes closest to our needs in Trail Forks, but it is crowdsourced which is problematic. We have had communication issues with Trail Forks when we have contacted them in the past. We need to check on getting administrative access to managing the content. **Chuck will contact Trail Forks about this.**

**Gary will check with the LVRT Trails Council to ask about apps that other towns are using. We can also check with other central Vermont towns and contact Vermont Forests, Parks, & Recreation about any plans for developing an app.**

New Business

**Michael will post landowner permission forms on Google Drive. We should eventually provide copies of these forms to the Town Clerk.**

Dana feels we should discuss extending the use of the Winter Trail to year-round in the coming year.

**Next meeting is time for election of officers and review of Rules of Procedure.**

Gary mentioned the proposal to have a local fundraising effort with the library to purchase snowshoes and cross-country skis for community members. The consensus was that the effort should focus on snowshoes and not skis, since there are many issues with sizes of equipment and managing a large amount of ski equipment, and potential liability with equipment that needs maintenance.

Summary of Action Items

**Walk Voigt trail to review possible routes this coming Sunday.**

**Meet with Ouweleen to discuss trail route.**

**Create map of Town Forest trails; explore other trails in vicinity of Town Forest.**

**Get new quote on Burt trail materials; create map of revised trail.**

**Chuck will check with Don Mitchell about plowing at Elm St. Cemetery.**

**Resolve issues as needed with Old Center trail.**

**Chainsaw training – Dec. 15-16; four committee members are signed up.**

**Demo of DR Power brush mower this coming Sunday.**

**Recreational grant response due December 12.**

**We will work this winter season on tailoring the Volunteer Service Agreement to our needs, issues, and concerns, to be ready this spring to utilize the forms. Check with school on liability coverage.**

**Chuck will contact Trail Forks to check on administrative access.**

**Gary will check with the LVRT Trails Council and others to ask about apps that other towns are using.**

**Michael will post landowner permission forms on Google Drive. We should eventually provide copies of these forms to the Town Clerk.**

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**Gary will share LVRT trail usage and economic impact analysis study.**