

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Hardwick Trails Committee**  
**August 1, 2016**

Attending: Norma & Ron Wiesen, Lenore & Wayne Renaud, Judy Bellairs, Joe Brosseau, Gail Johnson, Doug McClure, Dave Mitchell, Alex Utevsy, Pam Stonier

Guests: Al Cockrell and Nancy Shepard, Michael Bielawski - *The Gazette*

**1. Comments from NANCY and AL. Draft of MOU progress?** Al and Nancy handed out copies of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prepared by their attorney, Bill Davies of Barton, VT, that lays out wishes and expectations concerning the Shepard property and Hardwick Trails/Town. Points discussed were:

- o Water flow – how will it be diverted?

- o Liability – the Shepards are obligated to be good stewards of their land and do their conservation responsibilities. Will meet with their attorney to discuss how to assure Hardwick Trails activities do not conflict with Shepard conservation responsibilities.

- o Work being done by Hardwick Trails – the Shepards recognize that a lot of work is being done by Hardwick Trails volunteers, and are happy about the work done. They had recommendations concerning wetland sections of the trails on their property:

- *Let the wetlands area alone* by creating a cutoff close to the line that will keep the trails on dry land

- *Lean-to* – there is a lean-to on their land created by Northeast Kingdom Youth Services that raised Shepards' concern about potential for fire from campfires and restroom needs. Committee members clarified that the youth only use the lean-to for a few hours when they visit the trails, and the purpose is just to teach them how to build a shelter in the woods, not to build campfires. It was discussed that they be asked to move onto State property area of the trails. No follow up action was voted, nor person assigned to do that.

- *Steep area by the Rock* – Wayne will decide if water bars are needed to avoid erosion.

- o Signatures on the MOU - MOU must be signed by end of August. We need to speak with John Jewett and find out who will timely sign the MOU in behalf of Hardwick Trails. Hardwick Trails Committee members are not authorized to sign the MOU. Eric (Select Board member) needs to be made aware of the document. The Shepards and their attorney will be meeting with him tomorrow morning. They need clarification on the question as to whether Hardwick Trails are/should be members of a Vermont State trail group. They have not been able to find anything about a unified “everybody” State trail group. Norma clarified that Hardwick Trails is a dues-paying member of Vermont Trails and Greenways, but it is not a formal State group. Membership is for the purpose of being mentioned in their newsletter.

- o Shepards liability - State Statute protects landowners. It clarifies that landowners grant permission for people to be on their land but have no liability as long as visitors are not charged anything.

- o Relationship between Shepards and Hardwick Trails, and the MOU – a “win-win” for everyone. The MOU will clarify everyone’s expectations, Hardwick Trails, Town of Hardwick and Shepards. It puts in place an agreement whereby the conservation needs the Shepards have and the use needs of the Hardwick Trails will be met. The map attached to the MOU clarifies boundaries and where Hardwick Trails will access Shepards’ property.

o Hunting and Trapping – Shepards want hunting and trapping eliminated from their property. They will post laminated signs from the bottom of Richmond to Billings. Hardwick Electric and the Town will not post on their property. It would be helpful to have a “no guns” sign posted at the Trail Head. It will be a point to discuss with Hazen. Hardwick Trails needs a new MOU with Hazen. For consistency, it would be good to treat all signage on all sections of the trails the same. Trails committee needs to talk with the Town about this.

o Appreciation for walk with Foresters Rick Morrow and Dawn Morgan – The Hardwick Trails walk with Dawn and Rick on the entire trail from the trail head was a pleasure. It was good to see how seriously they have taken the Hardwick Trails relationship with the Shepards’ property. Dawn and Rick offered suggestions that can help us continue working to accomplish Forestry conservation goals. The Shepards’ Forest Management Program compliance goals get reported/set every ten years. Next update is in 2019. The Foresters praised work Wayne is doing to the Shepards. Some further work that Wayne will do will be cutting a corner by the Rock Bench to make the trail safer for skiers. This was discussed at today’s meeting with the Shepards, and they agreed the work could be done.

**2. Financials: LENORE** – for the first time we almost spent our exact budget this fiscal year. We ended with \$94.78 in the red, which will probably be covered out of Coin Drop proceeds. The trails excavation project put us over-budget. We are very pleased with the way that work was done. The Budget was \$7,767. We have a Cap Fund for matching grant funds - \$5,8\_\_?? from donations. As soon as we start grant-writing. Eric will need a partner. Need to raise \$20,000 total to swap out grooming – we have a good start, near \$6,000. For the first time Wayne used almost all funds set aside for summer work, except for \$10.

**3. Trails conditions: WAYNE** –The trails are gorgeous, re-seeded, and Judy has been mulching nicely, to cover exposed tree roots.

**4. Approve minutes of July 11, 2016 meeting** – The minutes needed some editing. Gail clarified that she, not Katherine shared idea about signage that she saw at Mohowunk Preserve near Minnewaska State Park, and that Katherine suggested making a wood frame sign to post in the Pest House. Ron moved and David seconded that Minutes be approved as edited. Approved.

**5. Additions to agenda** – Gail raised concerns that trail work damaged root systems, and that we need to talk about places needing damage repair

**6. Follow-up items:**

**A. Art event/ Scavenger Hunt event/ Perry’s sign** – The Art event was not well attended, but did get good picture coverage in the Hardwick Gazette. The Scavenger Hunt has great success – 37 participants. They found feathers – yellow shafted flicker and barn owl feathers. Perry’s sign is great. Everyone really appreciates it.

**B. Trails banner: PAM - Action** – Pam will do a draft design with Perry in August and bring it to next Trails Committee meeting for input and approval to go ahead to order. She is donating the banner.

**C. SIGNAGE COMMITTEE:** – We organized a committee of volunteers to work on taking action on all signage matters. Members of the committee are Gail Johnson, Judy Bellairs, and David Mitchell.

**(1) Signage @ GMTCC about motorized vehicles - Action (Aug) -**

There should be signage at GMCC trail head someplace stating these are no vehicle trails, and perhaps something about hunting, dogs - possibly provide a kiosk for the signage.

**(2) Highway signs - Action (Aug) -**

Gail reported, and had a handout showing that the State does have symbols for what can be allowed on trails - e.g., hiking, skiing, etc. Locations for the highway signs include the Firehouse, No. Main and Mill Streets, at the Police road, and perhaps near Positive Pie intersection on Route 14. These will be Town signs, with symbols, and maybe State signs. Cost for State signs are \$75 to make, and \$100 per year per sign. Lenore emphasized that we need to very clear that the trails are non-motorized recreation trails.

**(3) Natural heritage features/ Ecological communities**

**7. Upcoming event: PUMPKIN WALK:** This event takes all hands on deck.

**Date?** The Art teacher at the Hardwick Elementary School is not yet sure about a good date - Possibly second Sunday in October - the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Cider? Donuts?** - - We need to provide cider and donuts for about 700 people. Last year went to Freihofers and had an agreement for 45 dozen donuts. When we got there they had none, and we brought back all kinds of things. Joe will ask around for this year to find a supplier. In the past Jerry Hall was very generous and simply gave us the cider and donuts, but the store has changed hands and they will not be doing that. It was suggested that perhaps we dispense with the cider this year, but consensus was to continue to provide it. The Purple Trail is the location for the walk, that concludes with a bonfire and "friendly" witch stories, cider and donuts. It has become a custom in the Hardwick community that this is "what we do" on that Sunday in October. The pumpkins are lit, and every student in the elementary school has one. We have a donation bucket, but do not charge. Donations vary quite a bit - last year it was \$150. We have photos of past events. A local farmer takes pumpkins (we remove the tea lights). Ron reported that High Mowing is doing well with growing pumpkins for us.

**8. Suggestion: Handout for Hazen faculty** - Norma will hand out information about Hardwick Trails for Hazen faculty when teachers meet before school starts. We will offer Hardwick Trails support for projects school wants to do during the school year.

**9. Dogs on the Trails: ALL - Action**

**Handout: Hardwick Dog Control Ordinance** - Lenore handed out Hardwick's Dog Ordinance for us to take home and become familiar with. She suggested we make signs for the trails that includes Section D 1-5 wording, and reference to where the entire Ordinance can be found. Alex asked for clarification about where signs would be posted. Suggested at trail head. The membership discussed, and suggested it would also be good to post the information about the Ordinance on Front Porch Forum. More discussion was tabled for the September meeting.

**10. Other?** We will talk about trees next month. Judy will pass out information.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Pam Stonier

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**NEXT MEETING: Monday, September 12, 2016 5:30 @ the CABIN**