

Concord Conservation Commission
Trails Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023
DRAFT

Present: Scott Daniels, Chair; Fran Philippe, Vice Chair; Rob Knight; Gail Page; Rob Talmadge; Rik Van Riel (alt); Jeff Lewis, Conservation Commission Rep; Ron Klemarczyk, Consultant City Forester; City Planning Dept. staff: Beth Fenstermacher
Absent: Greg Mannesto; Erin Waters(alt)

Visitors: Matt Bowser, NEMBA; Jim Owers, Conservation Commission; Mark Redman (Trail Stewart); Aaron Monier; Tim Beaulieu, Concord High mountain bike club; Rebecca Ross, Rossview Farm

Meeting was called to order at 5:17 PM by Scott Daniels, Chair

1. Minutes for January 11, 2023 were approved as corrected.
2. Trail Maintenance and Reporting
 - a. City Forester report: More trail signs have been vandalized at Oak Hill. Fallen trees were cleared at Rolfe and Winant Parks. The Swope Park parking lot has been expanded to accommodate about four more cars.
 - b. Mark Redman has gotten complaints from local residents that the parking area at Mast Yard (along Broad Cove Road) has not been plowed. Beth Fenstermacher explained that the Conservation Commission budgeted \$9,000 to pay General Services to plow four areas: Winant, Swope, Broken Ground, and Oak Hill. Plowing additional areas is not in the budget. Beth will call General Services and see if they are willing to plow Mast yard parking area since it only entails plowing the road wider at that area.
3. New trail proposal – Mountain bike loop at Broken Ground: Matt Bowser from NEMBA presented a proposal for a 1.08-mile trail loop that would primarily follow existing skidder roads but also include a rocky section with terrain features attractive to mountain bikers. It would be located between Ry's Way Trail and the east leg of Marsh Loop Trail. Initial flagging has been done.

Ron Klemarczyk said that the skidder trails are intended to provide access for emergency vehicles, so nothing should be constructed in the skidder trails that would impede access. Tim Beaulieu from the high school mountain bike club spoke in favor of the new trail. He said the existing trails are heavily used by high school students, and terrain features in the new trail would be very attractive to his students.

Discussed at length the impact on wildlife. The new trail would create an area of high trail density that might drive wildlife from the area. Discussed the original purposes for acquiring Broken Ground. One purpose was to provide outdoor recreation access to an area of the city with high housing density, but little access to open space. Another purpose was to protect wildlife habitat. How can these two purposes be reconciled?

Discussed that the new trail would primarily benefit mountain bikers, and might be a step toward creating a mountain bike area that would attract riders to Concord and provide economic benefit to the city as well as making it a more attractive place to live. Heavy use might create parking problems.

Jeff Lewis suggested that a master plan for Broken Ground might be needed, rather than considering additional trails one at a time. The conflict between recreational use and wildlife habitat could be addressed, as well as parking. Jeff will discuss planning for Broken Ground

with the Conservation Commission.

The new mountain bike trail will be further considered at the next meeting, including ranking on the trail criteria checklist.

4. New committee members: Scott Daniels reported that the Trails Committee has two vacancies since Judy Weatherbee resigned and Rob Talmadge has offered his resignation. Rob was thanked for his years of service on the committee.

Scott is checking whether the alternate members are interested in stepping up to full membership. Rik Van Riel is not able to become a regular member at this time. Scott is reaching out to Erin Waters to see if she wants to step up.

Scott nominated Aaron Monier as a committee member, citing his longtime interest in the trails and many connections in the running community. Aaron said he would be interested in working on the trails, leading hikes, and willing to attend committee meetings.

Additional possible members were mentioned. Beth mentioned that Dan Williams had submitted a request to join; Rob Talmadge suggested Dan as a voice for wildlife and hunting. Dan is a hiker and mountain biker. Christi Benny submitted a request after the last meeting. Rebecca Ross expressed interest in joining the committee, citing her long interest in trails and the benefit of having landowner interests represented. Jeff Lewis and Rob Talmadge supported Rebecca's appointment to the committee.

The Conservation Commission has the ultimate appointing authority for committee members.

5. 2023 Goals and Projects: to be discussed next month.
6. Upcoming public hikes: February hike: Gail Page is scheduled to lead a hike. Gail has some concern about footing on the icy trails and suggested Blossom Hill Cemetery for a hike. However other organizations already have hikes scheduled for the cemetery. Swope Park was reported to be in good hiking at present. A hike at Swope Park was scheduled for February 25. Gail asked for a volunteer to assist as sweep. Mobility issues may prevent Fran from leading a hike in March.
7. Other business: Rebecca Ross expressed concern about flagging on Country Hill Estates property leading to a private section of Rossview Farm. Ron Klemarczyk and Jim Owers had been in the area but had not placed or seen any flagging.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Knight

Next meeting is March 8 at 5:15 in the 2nd Floor Conference Room