

Conservation Commission Trails Subcommittee Meeting

February 14, 2024

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 41 Green St.

Present: Fran Philippe (Chair), Ron Klemarczyk (Consultant City Forester), Aaron Monier (Secretary), Gail Page, Rik van Riel (alt.), Rebecca Ross, Anne Marie Skinner (Acting City Planner)

Absent: Mark Cheever

Guests: Andrew Gould, Miiko Bradley

Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. Motion to approve minutes from November 8, 2023 and January 10, 2024

- a. Gail Page asked for clarification on what Trail Loop Ron Klemarczyk was referring to in November minutes 4c and Ron explained where he fixed the broken decking on the foot bridge.
- b. Rebecca Ross motioned to approve minutes from both meetings, Aaron Monier seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. New Trail Proposal Updates

- a. Nothing to report from Northerly Bypass at discontinued District 5 Rd.
- b. Steeplegate Mall pond trail – Reconnaissance Results;
 - i. Ron Klemarczyk walked the proposed trail concept at the city-owned property adjacent to the former Steeplegate Mall.
 - ii. He noted areas of possible concern for trail management due to marsh land, steep banking, and abutting state-owned land.
 - iii. He observed tracks of fishers and coyotes, but no deer.
 - iv. Aaron Monier motioned to obtain more information regarding property boundaries and specific locations for boardwalks, in addition to obtaining State input regarding sections “J” and

“K”. Rebecca Ross seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

3. Discuss Group Composition

- a. Fran expressed a desire to ensure that the Trails Subcommittee was being progressive in representing each ward of the city and different outdoor enthusiasts.
- b. Anne Marie Skinner shared results from her survey of the Trails Subcommittee members and noted that each ward is represented and listed all the activities in which the Trails Subcommittee members partake on the trails.
- c. Currently, there are four openings for the Trails Subcommittee – two members and two alternates. Rik van Reil submitted his resume to the Conservation Commission to be considered as a member, rather than an alternate.

4. Procedure for Approving New Trails Document

- a. Fran Philippe suggested edits and updates to the adopted Procedure for Approving a New Trail or Trail Network.
- b. A discussion took place regarding the opening statement: “Note: The circumstances for each trail project are different; these steps are a guide and may be completed in a different order or omitted as appropriate.”
 - i. Fran Philippe expressed concern that this language may be detrimental to the purpose of having a Trails Subcommittee if not followed in the correct order or omitted.
 - ii. During discussion, Ron Klemarczyk brought up an issue with the new Broken Ground NEMBA trail. After seeing clearing and flagging at the start of what will be the new trail, in an email exchange with Matt Bowser, Mr. Bowser mentioned a

“trail corridor” in which they would place the new trail. In light of this issue, the discussion of the “Procedure for Approving a New Trail or Trail Network” was suspended by Fran Philippe. The Trails Subcommittee will continue to review the procedure and discuss edits at next month’s meeting.

- iii. Ron Klemarczyk expressed concern that there is no definition of “trail corridor” and he has not heard that term ever mentioned when discussing this new trail. NEMBA is under the impression that they have a 50-foot wide corridor in which to build the new Broken Ground mountain bike trail.
- iv. Rebecca Ross motioned to recommend to the Conservation Commission that they pause trail construction at Broken Ground until NEMBA can clarify the precise location of the new trail and discuss/define the trail corridor concept with the Trails Subcommittee or Conservation Committee. Rik van Riel seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

5. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.