

Monday, March 29, 2021

Andrews Community Forest Committee

Committee Members Attending: Wright Preston (chair), Nick Neverisky, Cecilia Danks, Tyler Merritt, Caitlin Littlefield, Jim Monahan, Amy Powers (taking notes)

Public present: Peter Halvorsen, Ethan Tapper

Committee Members Not Present: Ellen Kraft, Jesse Crary

Discussion of approving past minutes:

- All past minutes have been approved to date by all committee present. Those minutes approved are: 12/28/20; 1/14/21; 1/25/21; 2/11/21 and 2/22/21
- See bottom of this doc for summary.

Meeting Date and Use of Google Docs to take minutes

- Amy will send an email to Josh on two points:
 - Ask if we can do our committee minutes in google docs and put the link to the google docs on our webpage. This would be preferable to the committee in terms of simultaneous editing, live updating, etc.
 - Confirm that we'd like our meeting time to be listed as the last Monday of the month rather than the 4th Monday--sometimes there's a fifth Monday and that leads to confusion. (Times Ink, website, wherever it appears)

Public Comment

- Pete Halvorsen wondering about past item discussed in another meeting re: snowmobiles: Jesse's research confirmed that unless VAST supports the trail we shouldn't open it up. And it requires landowner permission without VAST designation. Feb. 15 Jesse Crary gave that snowmobile update. At some point we should talk to the public and see if the public would like snowmobiling to happen on ACF. Pete and Tyler confirmed witnessing a number of snowmobiles using the trail this winter. Tyler thought tracks going or coming from Prelco or VYCC. (Wright notes they are not coming from Prelco.) Wright affirmed that they should be getting landowner permission, like with any landowner, not just the town. Cecilia wondered about the Conservation Easement. Ethan: may be allowed, not restricted to an individual trail but the town can allow it and doesn't have to allow it. Wright: Reminder that Ellen sent a letter to adjoining landowners from ACFC in January specifying this about the snowmobiling.
- Pete Halvorsen: question about the Andrews Community Forest email address, how it's monitored. Nick: I monitor it and its only use is as an ability to contact the committee; I respond. Pete: I sent a letter to the committee 10 days ago and didn't hear back. Nick received a less formal version at his personal email address and will look at the more formal PDF currently. Pete would like the context of that letter to be in the meeting minutes. Nick forwarded the PDF to the committee. This letter can be made available to the public like other correspondence. Pete Halvorsen: flagging tape put into the forest for various reasons; over time I think it should be taken down. Arrowwood flagged some trails with blue tape, orange flag put in to mark boundaries. Wright, re: boundaries: we

were able to find the boundaries by seeing very old red paint on the trees, plus old flagging so I'm reluctant to remove all the flagging on the boundary line because it serves the next person who has to find and paint the boundary line; Ethan: 95% of the tape is stuff I've put up to mark skid trails, selective cutting, etc. and I will take it all down as I exit the project. I also advocate for keeping the tape up on the boundary lines as it helps mark the boundary line. Pete: change the color, because when you see orange it's a distraction from hunting. Request red or yellow tape, not hunting orange. Orange/red is boundary usually. Blue forestry. Wright offers to shorten the orange/red flagging on the boundary line. Ethan: makes sense for hunters; when we go around routinely every five years, we could change it to another color; I was trained to use orange on a boundary but we could correct it. Just would be a huge project to do it just for that reason.

Logging:

Roads posted at the end of logging season. This happened on March 5 (ish) this year in Richmond. And not much work is allowed after that so we're done for the foreseeable future. We did 80% of the work we intended. Probably one more month left of work if we go back in. We generated \$12K revenue for the town. Timber, firewood, hemlock for trail use, and proposing firewood for wood for good. Decision needed: do we ask Tim to come back after August 1 and finish up for another month, or do we say it's done. If so he'd come back in June/July and close out the roads and be done. Two more loads of logs need to be paid for, about \$2K. Pete: Water bars put in? Was water quality impacted? Yes, those were put in in Nov. when we got excavator and culverts donated. So when the ground thaws there's something in place. All main trails have them so I think we're in good shape for water quality. There's still restoration work to be done. Caitlin: how long could we delay letting him know? Ethan: ASAP, next couple months; he's in high demand, May meeting at the latest. No other harvest is prescribed; Ethan would like invasive species work down below log landing. That's the only part that's prescribed. What would the last month of work for Tim bring in? Ethan: \$3-5K guessing. Wright: could we get Tim up for a day in late April to clean up powerline meadow and skid roads that might need water bars and put them in with skidder. Could smooth the main farm road because it is full of potholes and holds water. Ethan: yes, equipment is there and would sit there until the next job (late May, likely). Tyler: Can he trim out a viewpoint from the log landing toward camel's hump? Some of the revenue could cover his work to do that? Ethan will coordinate with Arrowwood too. Late April is our next meeting--push off the vote til then.

- Firewood discussion and decision:
 - Tim saved 6 cords-ish for Wood for Good--vote on this
 - Can we pay for the trucking of that wood?
 - \$75/cord to cut and skid that wood which would deduct from final check (450)
 - \$160 per 1000 board feet deducted
 - \$200 to truck it over to Jericho
 - Motion to donate the wood and cover the cost (450 +200 =650 for the six cords)
 - Motion seconded.
 - Approved unanimously.
- Invasive species discussion
 - \$2500 of work to mitigate invasives

- Towns don't qualify for funds; only private landowners
- Decide next meeting
- Interpretive Signs
 - Hinesburg TF has a lot of signage we could pull from, QR codes linking to different info, QR code linking to a video of Ethan at the site
 - Couple hundred dollars to do this
 - Decide next meeting

Tony D'amato giving a talk about ecological forestry in huntington April 14 or 15

Benches and Table Boy Scout Project

- Jim walked up there with Colin, at log landing, make a hard right and there's a view of Robbins Mt. and he's going to put 2 tables there. The bench will be going down along the meadow trail. Colin Low will be installing this week.

Updates on Trail Design

- Jim reached out to Dory and Mariah. Not much to report yet. They've gone up a few times. They sent one bill to town. Pete: Aaron Worthley reached out to Pete on the interactive map with questions about deer yards. He made note of that with respect to the proposed trails. Aiming to wrap up by June/July.
- Should we put trail signs up re: foot traffic during mud season; Nick has posted reminders about that on social media but not as strong as trail signs. Is there a need for a 'be careful mud season' sign--Tyler offered to put up a couple signs.

The Gate

- Wright talked with a Gate subcommittee to meet with neighbors to the west to talk about the gate. Tyler reports that they are planning to meet this Thursday. Update next month.

The Bylaws of the Committee re: membership

- Judy at Conservation Commission wants to change the approach to appointing four members of our committee as 2 from trails and 2 from CC. Rather than them having 2 from their own committee, they can choose 1 from the committee and one from outside the committee. Purpose is to not overload certain individuals with too much committee meeting responsibility.
- We have 3 open slots coming up in May. Jesse wrote to town manager expressing interest in staying on. Caitlin and Jim also have terms ending this year. Jim sent in a letter as a Richmond Trails rep.
- Vote on Judy's/Conservation Commission's request: motion made and seconded to agree to Judy's plan for membership, and once we have the need to respond in that way we will (not shake up membership at this moment): motion unanimously approved.

Next Chair of the ACFC

- Wright: Who will be next Chair of our committee after the May selectboard meeting?
- Jesse was nominated in absentia. Discuss next meeting.

----Use of Google Docs--

Hi AFC committee-

I am going to distill here for you what I learned from Josh in following up about whether we can use Google docs as a committee. (Sounded like a yes/no question, but apparently not so much.) I'm cc'ing Josh here in case he'd like to correct or clarify anything.

--You can use a Google doc to do work if that work is done in an open meeting. So if you were in the meeting and all provided input on the document and edited it in the meeting that is fine.

--At any other time there should not be access to the document by more than a quorum.

--If your intent is to use Google docs to jointly work (i.e., full committee) on a document outside of an open meeting that is not allowed per open meeting law. However, if less than a quorum of committee members have access to the document, then work on a document would be permitted because it is less than a majority of the members.

--For minutes, Josh suggests we could take them during the meeting in a G-doc, then email them out, and have members read and provide feedback individually to the minute taker (so that everyone doesn't have access at the same time, outside the meeting). Then a final draft can be sent out for review prior to the next meeting. I guess this is where we might want to discuss. **The tedium of this last point sounds a bit like killing the spirit of a google doc, but we could decide at the next meeting. It basically means changing permissions at various times.**

Also, Josh confirmed that he'd change our meeting listing to 'last Monday of the month' to avoid confusion between 4th and 5th Mondays.

See you all on the next last Monday.

Amy

Amy,

You covered this topic well. Nicely explained.

Josh Arneson

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