

Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2015
5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jessie Bradley, Jenny Cole, Larry Hamilton, Sue Smith

Public Comment: None

Minutes: The minutes from April 9 were approved with no changes.

Park maintenance: updates, work days, approval of spring expenditures

The Committee discussed removal of the maple trees planted along the Thorp Trail. There has been a push by some people in the community to remove the trees because they will block the view of the Adirondacks from Route 7. Following discussion of the benefits of keeping the trees (stream abatement, Route 7 traffic sound buffer for walkers on the trail, aesthetics) and the poor condition of some of the trees, the Committee decided to remove dead elms in the area and diseased/damaged maples. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation in the future, selectively trimming or removing trees if necessary to enhance the view.

There is \$1500 in the budget for gravel trail work. The group decided to spend up to the budgeted amount to clear and reposition stones at the openings of culverts (indicated on a park map) and to add gravel to the Thorp Trail along the drainage ditch into Holmes Creek. Jenny will contact Lewis Excavating, Prestons, Steve Denton and Chris Fortin for cost estimates and availability. Two areas in Units I and D would benefit from erosion control planning by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Jessie reported that Teacher's Tree Service will cut the dead trees near Roberts Way for \$75—basically a donation. They are able to provide the Certificate of Insurance required by the Town.

Jessie reported that the Byington family would like to donate a replacement bench for the park. Jessie is looking into options for a long lasting bench that can be secured to the ground.

Green Up Day work included cleaning up around the Thorp Barn and removing some of the old fence in the stone wall between Units L and M. Jenny will contact Dale Knowles about expanding the lawn area around the Thorp Barn to keep burdock and wild parsnip in check. Sue and Jenny recommended brush hogging the field behind the barn while cutting the area behind the Kent house to control wild parsnip. Committee members suggested asking Junior if he could do this when the Route 7 mowing is done.

Sue will contact Mike LaClair about smoothing ruts where large bales were removed near the hedgerow behind the Thorp Barn.

Joe Blasius has been working on replacing trail signs. The old carved trail names are being trimmed down and reused. Some of these will need to be replaced in a year or two. Jenny will look into laser carving.

There are still bog bridges and waterbars work to complete. Jenny would like to organize volunteer work days to finish up projects started last fall.

Other park maintenance items were discussed. They are listed, and Committee members will follow through on completion.

Renewal of Agricultural Lease

The Selectboard agenda item has been moved to June 8. It was suggested at the April 27 Selectboard meeting that the Town not agree to the 5 year renewal option in the current lease, but to seek proposals from interested farmers. The Committee supports renewal. Jessie stated that her recollection was that when the current lease was agreed upon, the 5 year renewal allowed the Town to discontinue the lease if there were problems. The Committee discussed inviting the Selectboard to a site visit prior to the meeting.

Meeting with Tim Hunt

No plan to meet yet. Tim is trying to get the foundation done. Jeannine McCrumb suggested that Stuart Morrow mark the boundary line.

Wildflower Walk

The Walk will not take place. Colleen Armstrong is not available.

A thank you to Bob Hyams

Bob has moved to Hinesburg. His work on the Committee is much appreciated. Committee members hope he will continue to participate in volunteer activities in the park. The Committee discussed ways to acknowledge his contribution.

Committee membership was discussed. Jessie will be resigning from the Recreation Commission but would like to continue as Park Committee member. It was acknowledged that the Management Plan should be changed to allow more flexibility in membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.