

TRAILS COMMITTEE MINUTES 02/07/2017

Members attending: Laurie Thompson, Margaret Russell, Mary Van Vleck, John Limanek, Christine Cowart

Minutes reviewed and approved

- Christine Cowart recording for this meeting

Discussed:

- Dubois & King have been attending meetings with Margaret and Laurie with landowners along the proposed route for the next section of the Town Link Trail.
 - They attended a meeting for the Stonewall neighborhood. Only the Dodges and Gary Franklin were there, but they made progress by showing them where the Mack easement is. Margret mentioned that we will likely start mowing that easement this summer.
- We have not made any progress talking with the Lombards. Margret will ask Robert Mack for an introduction.
- Ed Stone is open to having the trail on his land. It would not be a direct route, but may be an option if we need it.
- The Dubois & King public meeting to discuss the progress of the scoping project has been rescheduled to February 28, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. We should announce it in the Front Porch Forum and the Charlotte News.
- Dubois & King has submitted a bill of their hours to date, and it is for about one-third of the \$50,000 grant. They still have a lot of work to do, most notably, the engineering proposals for the two portions of the trail on which they are focusing.
- The SCHIPS grant was submitted on January 31, 2017. We requested \$1,500, which would cover the cost of three benches along the completed portion of the Town Link Trail.
- Margaret and Laurie met with the Planning Commission to discuss the town plan map. It seems the portion of the map that indicated a desired corridor from Mount Philo to the East Village was inadvertently left off, and it will be included in the next version of the map. They seemed excited about the creation of the Town Link Trail.
- Discussed recent updates to social media and the website. Christine has updated the Town website and linked it seamlessly to our Town Link Trail

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website (charlottetrailsvt.org). She has also begun a public awareness campaign through Front Porch Forum and Facebook.

- Trails Committee members encouraged to follow the Facebook page, and actively like, comment, and share posts.
- Planning for Town Meeting Day
 - John and Laurie cautioned against too long of a presentation. They warned that by the time our article is raised, it will be late, and people won't want to sit through a long pitch.
 - Clark Hinsdale will speak on behalf of Trails. He recently suggested that the Trails and Conservation budget should be merged, as they serve mutually beneficial purposes.
 - John and Laurie suggested we focus on convincing the people present just to let the article go to the Australian ballot. Christine cautioned that the people present may feel as though that weakens their voice since we are asking them not to vote it down immediately, but to open the question to a larger audience. Christine suggested the following argument: Last year, the whole town voted to allow things to go to Australian ballot as a way of allowing a more democratic and fair process. It is in that spirit that we are requesting our article be advanced to the Australian ballot so that the whole town may have the opportunity to vote on this measure.
 - Margaret mentioned that people are already using proximity to the Town Link Trail to help sell their houses. We should use that as a way of illustrating it's benefit to property values.
 - Margaret suggested comparing the \$40,000 we are considering to the \$900,000 annual appropriation for the town's roads.
 - Christine asked how many residential tax payers there are in Charlotte. Dividing the \$40,000 by that number will help put it in perspective for voters.
 - Laurie mentioned that the Conservation budget is decreasing, so this \$40,000 shouldn't actually raise the tax burden on residents. We should confirm this with Dean. If it is true, the wording of the article is misleading, and we need to clear up the misconception.
 - Twenty-five percent of the land in Charlotte is conserved. This has lowered the tax base and reduced the number of students in our schools. At what point has the Town achieved it's conservation goals?

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Action Items:

- Margret will ask Robert Mack for an introduction to the Lombards
- Christine will announce the Dubois & King public meeting to discuss the progress of the scoping project on Front Porch Forum and Facebook
- We will also announce the Dubois & King public meeting in the Charlotte News
- Christine will continue an aggressive public awareness campaign through Front Porch Forum and Facebook
- All Trails Committee members encouraged to follow the Facebook page, and actively like, comment, and share posts
- Christine will ask Dean how many residential tax payers there are in Charlotte and whether the Conservation budget is decreasing, and use that information to put the tax burden in perspective
- Margret, Laurie, and Christine will prepare talking points for Town Meeting Day by their meeting on Friday, February 10, 2017, and will use them to craft a cohesive message
- All Trails Committee members are encouraged to **GET OUT THE VOTE** for Town Meeting Day, March 7, 2017
- Long term action item: Margret and Laurie will talk to Dean about including mowing the easement on the Mack property in this year's mowing budget

Next Meeting is set for February 28, 2017. It will be a Public Meeting held in the Charlotte Town Hall by the engineers, Dubois & King.

Town Meeting Day is March 7, 2017. Please get as many trails-friendly people to Town Meeting as possible!