

East Montpelier Trails Committee Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2018

Present: Carol Dickson, Bruce Howlett, Dave Burley, Mary Stone, Josh Ryan, Dave Webb, Rick Hopkins, Nona Estrin, Sue Chickering

Minutes from December 5th: Approved unanimously.

Bobolink Trail discussion:

Bruce recommended, instead of a permanent easement, they were willing to do a 10 year renewable easement. This is a change from our requirement of a permanent lease. A precedent has already been set on the Ormsbee trail, which has a trailhead and access route across private land on Powderhorn Glen. **We will discuss this 10 year renewable lease option at our next meeting.**

potential trail route discussion: note that Josh, as project manager, will work out details with Bruce and report back to us with various options

It is important to note that dogs would need to be on a leash along the hedgerow to Towne Hill Road.

If we need a bridge somewhere Josh said that as long as we used pressure treated lumber for the underpinning, it would last for a good long while, with only the decking needing to be replaced earlier. This trail would be a connector from Mallory Brook Trail to Towne Hill Road, to connect via School House Road to the U32 trails and the Karen Clark trail.

Coming from Chris Pratt's property there are several different routes north of the hedgerow to consider. The northwestern part of the property would be the driest route and accommodate mountain bikers until you come to the stream before the hedgerow. It is also great birding habitat. There would definitely need to be a bridge if we decided on this route through the old cow pasture and near the beaver dam. On the north side of the hedgerow is a glacial feature called a "Drumlin" where glaciers have dumped a heap of rocks. One of the routes we could go would be to go up and walk right along the top of this drumlin, but we would run into raspberry bushes and somewhat steep access coming up from the south and down the other side. There is a stream on the southern end of the drumlin that you can actually walk across without a bridge. The easiest route is on the eastern side of the drumlin because there are old logging roads and trails and less trail construction. With regard to the question about mountain bike accessibility, Bruce and Carol are OK with this, but it might affect where we choose to place the trail, which would likely be on either side of the drumlin.

In the middle of the trail, Bruce recommends we go along a hedge row but not in the hedgerow because it is full of large boulders, which has two parts, one running between Richard Hoffman's land and Bobolink's land and the next section they own both sides of the hedgerow (with an exception of Steve Connor's parcel (which he allows them to graze their sheep on anyway). Bruce believes that the western

side of the hedgerow is more scenic because you are not looking down at the main road, but then we would have to get permission from the other two landowners (Connor and Hoffman). If we went with Bruce's recommendation, we would need to build a boardwalk that is approx. 500' long from Towne Hill Road, following his boundary on the southern end of the property. Bruce and Carol are not opposed to using pressure treated wood for the base of this boardwalk. The alternative would be to use an excavator to trench and pile a trail with culverts. If we did this area, the trail would be between the woodland and the fenced in pasture. Bruce offered to mow the open area. We could also check with Sue and Chris Racanelli and Kathy Rice about going further around the wet area to avoid having to build a long boardwalk. This would go through pine trees and be the driest area to run the trail, and much less costly. A back up plan could also follow the old farm road and an old logging road that Bruce wants to open back up to log again (a bridge would need to be constructed, ideally with the load capacity of a ton – maybe 16 feet wide to fit a small tractor with a brushhog), on the other side of a ravine closer to the farm, walking down Towne Hill Road. Mtn bikers could also use this alternate route. We might want to think about creating a parking area on School House road (possibly under the power line) near Towne Hill Road. **When the time comes for this project to happen, Josh will be the project manager and work closely with Bruce Howlett to figure out the details. He plans to walk the property with Bruce to determine the best route possible, at least for the time being. When talking about a timeline, we are hoping for the sooner the better, ideally depending on Josh's schedule.**

Sparrow Farm Trail: Rick says that new planks are needed for new wet areas along the outer reaches of the pasture perimeter. Approximately 100-125' total to make bridging 40" wide to accommodate the mower. Josh moves that we table this until Rick is here to talk about it at the next meeting. This \$ request is for installation on National Trails Day. Josh is happy to have his company do this, including materials, given the scope and nature of this project. Josh also plans to finish installation of the Karen Clark signposts in the spring.

Update on Mallory Brook: Chris is planning to drag logs down to the bridge area, but it has been delayed with weather and illness.

Next meeting: March 13th 6:00 PM (we need a location)