

## Town Commons Meeting Minutes for February 22, 2023:

- In attendance: Jeremy Litchfield (chair), Fred Koerber, Blaine Moore, Jym St. Pierre, Dennis Wilson (Parks & Facilities Manager), John Eldridge (Town Manager)
- Called to order at 5:03pm
- Charge Update Presented to the Town Council
  - Town Council Meeting last night (February 21)
  - Everything we proposed was approved
  - Only change was around the language of subcommittees to change the language to refer to ad-hoc groups/working groups/task force.
  - We are the first committee to submit a new charge proposal and so it is serving as a template going forward.
  - The committee can now have up to 11 members with up to 2 students (one high school resident and one Bowdoin student.)
  - Appointments committee is going to provide a workbook for committees to use as a guide for how to operate.
- Trail Usage Proposal to the Council and 2023-2024 Budget Request
  - The Boundary Trail is very wet year round.
  - As an existing long term trail, building approved style of bog bridges is considered maintenance per the DEP.
  - We are proposing that the trail be changed to pedestrian only until the bog bridges are installed to prevent further erosion and goat trail creation.
  - John Eldridge and Tom Farrell looked over the Rec budget and put in a \$20,000 budget for the bog bridging as part of the first draft to go into the budget submission.
  - Preliminary budget will probably be presented to the Town Council in the first meeting in March. Workshops will take place until the official budget is submitted in April. There will be public hearings and the official budget adoption will happen in May. Tom and Dennis will inform us when our budget discussions will be scheduled.
  - John believes that the chances of this project being funded through the official budget or grants is high.
  - There are also some goat trails that have been created between the main trails and Route 123, and we are working with DEP to see how extensive the permit applications are to officially adopt those trails. The town refers to these trails as "rogue trails" and Parks & Rec is trying to get a better handle on the creation of these unofficial trails throughout the town. As regulated public space we need to be cognizant of how and where trails are created.
  - Fred is looking forward to working closer with other committees in town with common interests.
  - Creating road crossings of Route 123 is difficult but being discussed on the town level.
- Trail Usage, Maintenance, and Management:
  - We have about 4 weeks remaining for pulling white pine saplings from the pitch pines barren. Should be done before April 1st as the weather is starting to warm up already.
  - The dead tricentennial trees are already scheduled to be replaced.
  - All of the American Chestnut saplings have been planted. If they are available for sale again from the nursery, we will want to purchase some more.
  - Fix and replace broken trail signs, as well as finishing our proposal for trail designations (existing and proposed.)

- If we create a proposal for trail names for Town Commons and trails going into the Greater Commons, and then present that proposal to Tom Farrell and recreation commission for feedback and eventually get approval from the Town Council.
- Greater Commons extends south from the boulders, and north until the private property where trails pass through to Bowdoin. There are small pieces of town property dispersed between private property on the trails so that we could potentially get signs installed solely on town property and at Bowdoin without having to worry about other individual property owners or associations.
- Jeremy will pose a question to the group after the meeting to see if anybody has the bandwidth to get a first draft trail convention proposal for us to begin working with.
- Budget:
  - The Davis Fund, Senter Fund, and Athletic Brewing grant applications may be a good source for alternative funding for some of our projects we've been discussing.
  - We can apply for funds, but will have to get approval from the Town Manager and Finance Director before we would be able to accept any funds awarded.
  - Approval for soliciting local businesses would need to be checked ahead of time so that the town is aware of anybody reaching out to the town about finance requests.
- New Membership
  - We will reach out to the high school and college to let them know that we are interested in bringing in student members and to gauge interest.
  - We want to make sure that the first student(s) we add to the committee will have an opportunity to set the model and follow through so that we can maintain interest for continuity in the future.
  - The students will need to apply and go through the appointments committee, the same as other committee members.
  - Students will be on the school calendar year.
  - The website needs to be updated to list how many openings on the committee that we have, especially as Fred plans on stepping down. We have 4 resident and 2 student openings. Dennis will have the town website updated for us.
  - It may be worth reaching out to the local newspapers to let people know about the new charge and openings on the committee. Dennis will get back to Jeremy about whether we can take initiative for that.
- "Friends of the Commons"
  - Jeremy would like us to think before the next meeting about ways we can organize an email list of people interested in volunteering or as a resource for projects with the Town Commons.
  - There was an informal Friends group about 20 years ago.
  - We could potentially include information in the kiosk.
- Next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 15th, at 5pm.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:13pm.