

Rockland Preserve Committee Meeting

July 19, 2021

Attendance:

Cecily Baran, Jason Engelhardt, Lori Lodge, Dave Okamoto, Joe Oslander,

Approval of May 14, 2021 minutes- discuss and action

Changes - None

Approved: Unanimously

Chair's report:

Needs at the Rt. 79 entrance to Rockland:

- Stone accessible path in playground area show signs of erosion from rain and could use some drainage.
- Library door needs to be fixed – Joe or Jason will take care of this.
- Entrance to 79 parking lot needs to be re-graded as there are large holes in the area immediately adjacent to the road.
- Grass needs to be mowed. It has grown quite long

New Beach & Rec Director, Austin Hall, could not attend the meeting as he had a Board of Selectmen that required his attendance. Austin submitted the following report via Joe Oslander:

- The trail that is being rerouted in the northern part of the preserve at Poole Road by the CT Forest & Part Association (CFPA) is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ finished. The full section of the trail should be useable by hikers by the end of next week.
 - The committee has concerns about garbage that is dumped and vehicles that are parked on Rockland Property on Poole Road near the home that is located there and seeks town assistance with these matters to ensure its prompt removal.
 - The committee would like to encourage that CFPA put up temporary trail signage until permanent signage can be secured. New maps also need to be developed, purchased, and erected as per the agreement.
- Austin will await a request from the committee for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds grant application.
 - The committee discussed potential projects that it would seek funding for:
 - Piggyback on the application being submitted for composting toilets at Salt Meadow and East Wharf. Currently there are port-o-lets at the Rt. 79 entrance to the preserve. This is a very high traffic area used by families with children, hikers and singletrack bikers and would benefit from a composting toilet. The committee also recommends replacing the outhouse adjacent to the pines at the Renee's Way entrance with a composting toilet as well. Since Rockland is on a watershed.
 - Installing a well near the pines as there is currently no water access in that area which has high traffic volume and would serve the camp site with water.
 - A pollinator garden at the playground located at the Rt. 79 entrance as well as one at the north side of the pond which is currently being treated for invasives.
 - Improved emergency access at Rt. 79 by moving the gate and reconfiguring the area to better serve emergency vehicles in case of emergencies.
- Austin also asked that the committee decide upon a place to hold the meeting moving forward now that we are meeting in person.
 - The committee agreed that it would continue to meet outdoors at the Rt. 79 entrance to the Preserve while the weather is warmer but will move inside if in-person meetings are still permitted in the late fall and winter.
 - The committee agreed that it would prefer to meet at NOMAD Fire House if we are still welcome and will reach out to the Chief.

Discussion on Campsite:

- CFPA asked if the campsite could be listed in their literature and if they could manage the registrations for using the campsite. Currently, all reservations go through Beach & Rec

with CFPA referring those interested to Beach & Rec. The committee discussed this request and made the following recommendations:

- The information in the literature can be listed and will direct anyone pursuing a reservation to contact Beach & Rec.
- All reservations will continue to go through Beach & Rec and not CFPA.
- Firepits
 - Only the main firepit should be kept.
 - All other firepits (those at individual campsites) still need to be removed. The town crew was going to remove the firepits.

Storm Damage:

- Most of the fallen trees have been removed.
- Committee members are working on removing the remaining fallen trees.

Pump Tracks:

- Jason reported that the pump track needs to be resurfaced and rocks need to be removed because of erosion.
- He has received quotes which are exceedingly high and believes that with a volunteer work crew, the committee can take care of this.
- Routine maintenance should take place annually.
- The committee recommends working with Austin to make a maintenance plan for the area.

Pollinator garden on north side of pond:

- Cecily reported that the first treatment for the invasives on the north side of the pond went well and the mug wart received a second application. The second treatment for the invasives will occur late summer.
- This fall the dead invasives will need to be cleared away.
 - Cecily will talk with Austin about the town crew clearing it.
- The town has received \$5.3 million from the ARP. Proposals and applications are currently being received by the First Selectwoman.
 - The committee will submit a summary of the project which will include the vision of the garden, the environmental benefits, an educational component, and a budget.
 - The committee will be seeking partnerships from this project from the high school Eco club/ environmental club, Girl/Boy Scouts, area garden clubs, and local garden centers to name a few.
- This garden will help to address creating green infrastructure under the ARP.

Coan Pond Trail report:

- The committee is surpassing the required number of monthly inspections and is submitting its monthly report to RWA on time.

Other points of discussion:

- The committee unanimously agreed to change the meeting time to 7 pm to better meet the needs of its members. Meetings will remain on Mondays barring any conflicts with future meeting spaces.
- The committee discussed the importance of having a representative from Beach & Rec at all meetings and agreed that future meetings will be cancelled or rescheduled if a representative cannot attend the meeting.
- The committee would like clarification on the coverage of committee members against any litigation that may occur in the future should a case be levied against the town and then this committee's members.

Next meeting: September 20, 2021

Respectfully submitted-
Lori Lodge