

Open Space and Trails Committee
Minutes of Meeting
December 15, 2014

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ann Moses at 7:00PM

Members Present: Ann Moses, Todd Rolland, Richard Bailey, John Curran, Wes Smith, Shawn Burgmyer, Eric Anderson, Barbara Anderson, and Patrice Carson.

Motion by Wes Smith to approve the 11/10/14 Minutes as written. Seconded by Barbara Anderson.
Unanimous

Todd Rolland distributed copies of the Camp Aya Po Survey and the Camp Aya Po Conservation and Public Recreation Easement to all committee members present.

Richard Bailey distributed copies of maps showing the location of trails at Camp Aya Po as well as Soapstone and Bald mountains.

Ann Moses reviewed the recent town meeting at which it was agreed to shelve plans to sell the six proposed lots on Camp and Stafford roads.

Discussion of Camp Aya Po property

Todd Rolland said that asbestos abatement has been completed on all the buildings but demolition is on hold until funds can be identified and possibly until the Camp Aya Po committee has been formed.

Richard Bailey distributed a map showing the location of existing and possible future trails at Aya Po. The lack of trails south of Camp Rd. was discussed with Patrice Carson describing the area which contains wetlands and old fields as well as old fields. It was pointed out that this area is very good diverse wildlife habitat.

The history of the CFPA Shenipsit Trail passing through Aya Po was discussed and it was agreed that it should be utilized but re-named to avoid confusion with the current relocated CFPA trail.

Richard Bailey suggested locations for new trails that do not currently exist including a loop trail around Hurds Pond, a trail connecting the old Shenipsit trail to the Aya Po parking area, and a trail from the top of Perkins Mountain down to the existing woods road near Stafford Road. The committee agreed that painted blazes were the best option for marking trails. Todd Rolland said Somers DPW could assist with signage.

The safety problem with the possible trail around the lake having to cross the dam by following the road was discussed. Todd Rolland said that although the dam could not be widened to accommodate the trail running beside Camp Road, the possibility of erecting a barrier to prevent through traffic on Camp Road was an option the town is looking into. Todd Rolland also said he would talk to Dave Askew about the possible trail passing through wetlands at the upper end of Hurd Pond.

Patrice Carson said that one of the lots along Stafford Road close to the gate at the end of the woods road could be used for a second parking area.

The committee agreed that we need to identify and make contact with people who have flagged a trail on the east side of Perkins Mountain. Dominic had sent an email saying that he had met some of the responsible people at Aya Po who identified themselves as mountain bikers. Richard Bailey suggested adding someone from the biking community to the committee.

The possibility of connecting trails at Aya Po to trails on Dan Roullier's Worthington Pond property was discussed. A benefit would be the possibility of parking horse trailers at the larger Worthington pond lot. Patrice Carson agreed to talk to Dan to see if he would allow this.

Richard Bailey suggested that a forest management plan be created for Camp Aya Po to both provide a snapshot of the property as is exists as well as identify future projects to benefit wildlife. R. bailey will draft a letter making this recommendation which will be reviewed at the next SOSTC meeting.

Todd Roland said that liability release forms needed to be signed by any volunteers performing work on town property. Todd will make the forms available to committee members.

Other Town Open Space Properties

The South Forest Trail off Mountain View Road is in very poor shape and needs work to make it passible for hikers and riders. The need to establish the location and width of the Right-of-Way was identified as a first step before any improvement is started. Both T. Rolland and P. Carson said they would look for a survey. Problems include invasive species overgrowing the trail, wet muddy stretches, and the lack of suitable stream crossings for horses. Todd Rolland said DPW might be able to assist in this effort with equipment and manpower. The lack of parking at the trailhead on Mountain View Road was discussed and Wes Smith said that it was never intended to provide parking there and that hikers could park either at Whitaker Woods or Soapstone Mountain. Ann Moses said that since this trail along with the North forest Trail forms a link between horse trails in Shenipsit Forest and Whitaker Woods, the Connecticut Horse Council was willing to assist in improvement and maintenance of this trail. Wes Smith said he was willing to be a point of contact between CHC and SOSTC.

Meeting Schedule

T. Rolland pointed out that Feb. 16 was a holiday and the town hall was closed. Feb. 17 was agreed on as a replacement. Motion by P. Carson to approve the meeting schedule as amended. Seconded by A. Moses. Unanimous

FOI Training

T. Rolland informed the committee that FOI training would be held Feb. 14 at the town hall. At least one committee officer is required to attend although all committee members are encouraged to do so.

Ann Moses will draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen recommending that Dick Hutton be added to the committee.

Adjournment

Motion by W. Smith to adjourn at 9:02PM. Seconded by P. Carson – Unanimously voted

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Bailey
Committee Secretary