

TOWN OF SOMERS
Open Space and Trails Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday May 17th, 2021, 7:00 PM
Town Hall Auditorium

I. Call to Order:

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

II. Members Present:

Ann Moses, Richard Bailey, Dick Hutton, Joan Sears, Dominic Wilson, Mike Blouin, Eileen Blouin, Michael Maynard, Brad Dolben, Maureen Parsell and Todd Roland

III. Audience: Pat Boudreau

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Mike Blouin to approve the 4/19/2021 Minutes as written. Seconded by Brad Dolben. Motion carried.

V. Correspondence: None

VI. Old Business

There are 250 Trails Brochures remaining out of over 2000 printed. Distribution to local businesses and Somers Library should be able to resume next month as things open back up.

Maureen Parsell has finished creating the QR codes and descriptions for all Somers trailheads. It was agreed that the signs including the QR code should be 8-1/2 x 11 rather than the originally suggested smaller size to fit on existing map boxes. It was also suggested that the signs be in color rather than black and white to make them more visually appealing. Maureen will create the final design which will include a Somers Trails hashtag. Todd Roland will order the metal signs. The linked map for McCann Farm needs to be modified to correct mistakes

PROJECT PLAN REVIEW

Camp Aya Po

Todd Roland reported that Somers DPW will be maintaining the existing amphitheater. The previous plan was to remove benches as they deteriorated and not replace. The bushes in front of the amphitheater which were starting to obscure the view of the lake have been removed. The long-term plan still includes creating seating in front of the big fireplace.

Bald Mountain

Much work has been done to improve the loop trail by committee members Dom Wilson and Mike and Eileen Blouin. The parking area on County Road has been cleared of encroaching vegetation. A new route on the east side of the ridge which eliminates the very steep section has been flagged by Richard Bailey and cleared of vegetation. Richard will schedule a date to blaze the entire trail. A new map of the trail needs to be created for the QR code sign link. Richard will work on the map and send to Maureen. Mike said he would make a new wooden sign to be placed at the parking area to increase its visibility so people will recognize it as a trail-head.

Somersville Mill Trail

Richard Bailey has used a brush cutter to cut back the large patch of Japanese Knotweed which is a continuing issue. The possibility of applying a herbicide was discussed but due to the close proximity to the Scantic River it was decided to just periodically cut it back. Richard has designed a trail bridge to replace the deteriorated one at a stream crossing near the Somers Enfield line. Todd has obtained a quote for materials. A work party is tentatively scheduled for Saturday June 26th to construct the bridge. Richard will send out notice to SOSTC volunteers in June

BUTTERFLY MEADOW

The planned location of the butterfly has been moved from the large field east of Camp Road to the north edge of the field west of Camp Road. The original plan to have the girl scouts remove invasives from the large field was deemed beyond their capabilities. Somers DPW has completed site work at the new location including removing some invasives along the wood edge, tilling the plot and putting down mulch. Thirty-eight plants have been ordered for pick-up on May 22nd with planting soon after. The girl scouts are creating temporary signs to put up at the time of planting. The Somers Rotary Club is in discussions with Joan Sears about future plans for this year and next. Joan suggested putting an ad in Marketplace asking for donated native flowers to expand the plot. It was suggested that a fence or other barrier be erected around the plot to keep people out until the plants become established.

VII. New Business

Michael Maynard and Brad Dolben asked about committee members working on SOSTC projects on their own outside of scheduled work parties. Todd said that was not a problem as long as they had a signed release form

on file and the work performed was not dangerous such as cutting large trees. Richard requested that anyone doing SOSTC volunteer work should keep track of their hours to give to Richard or Todd.

Pat Boudreau shared her vision of what she would like to see done at Camp Aya Po. She said she would need help from the committee and/or Somers DPW to accomplish this work. She would like to see the blacktop swales built to carry water away from the camp cabins preserved by cutting and removing vegetation. She feels this would require a brush cutter. The swales have historical but no longer serve a function. She would like to also see the stairs to the left of the road up the hill preserved. Ann Moses suggested that Pat choose dates when she would like to have work parties under her supervision.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next SOSTC meeting is scheduled for Monday June 21st 2021 at 7:00 PM.

IX. Adjournment

8:40 pm. Motion to adjourn by Eileen Blouin, seconded by Joan Sears. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Bailey

Secretary