

TOWN OF SOMERS
Open Space and Trails Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday Oct. 18th, 2021, 7:00 PM
Town Hall Auditorium

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ann Moses at 7:02 PM

II. Members Present:

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

III. Audience: Debra Romano

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Dick Hutton to approve the 9/20/2021 minutes as written. Seconded by Joan Sears. Motion carried.

V. Correspondence: None

VI. Old Business

Butterfly Meadow

The permanent signs for the meadow have been ordered but not yet received. A sign about the painted rocks places by the Girl Scout Daisies has been added to the area. Joan Sears said that it would be beneficial to add milkweed plants to the meadow to attract monarch butterflies. Dick Hutton commented that he has planted milkweed on his property and they can be transplanted or planted as seeds after cold storage for at least two months.

Trails Brochures

An additional 1000 brochures have been purchased.

Eagle Scout Projects

Colin Carullo from Troop 179 in East Longmeadow has installed metal benches at two locations at Camp Aya Po. Two benches have been placed at the beach area and one at the second beach where the old boat house stood. All the benches are secured to cement bases. Scout Jack Logan is also planning an Eagle Project to install benches at Aya Po.

Trail Maintenance

It was reported by several committee members that the Somersville Mill Trail is close to impassible and in need of significant work. The main problems include wet areas and stream crossings difficult to navigate due to the very wet weather this year. There are also several downed trees and the never-ending Japanese Knotweed problems. A work party will be scheduled for later in November to start to address these issues. The Somers Boy Scout troop leaders will be included in the work party notification.

The Forest View Trail also has trees down and is becoming overgrown. It will also need a work party scheduled.

VIII. New Business

Todd Roland reported that DEEP has money available for trails related projects and is accepting grant proposals. These grants are designed to fund 80% of the total project cost with the remaining 20% funded by the town. In kind labor is acceptable to cover the 20%. Two potential uses for grant money were discussed including the bridges still needed on the Somersville Mill Trail and a boardwalk spanning the area of Japanese knotweed also on the Somersville Mill Trail. This could greatly reduce the frequency of cutting the knotweed.

Patrice Carson suggested that grant money might be used to purchase equipment for trail maintenance such as a walk behind brush cutter.

It was suggested that the trails committee work on proposals for 2022 funding.

Todd Roland reported that he contacted Enfield DPW about responsibility for maintenance of the portion of the Somersville Mill Trail in Enfield. He was told that the town was not involved since the trail is on state land. Responsibility would rest with the state or an organization designated by the state such as the Scantic River Watershed Association. Since the trail existed but was not being maintained before SOSTC started working on it, the feeling is that no one would object to our taking it over and making improvements.

Dick Hutton asked how much money is currently in the Somers Open Space Fund? Todd said that since there have not been any large development projects in town lately there were not significant offset funds being added. Todd will look into this since the fund is a stand-alone fund and the monies in it can not be used for other purposes.

Dick also asked if there were still funds left in the USA Hauling grant fund which might be used for purchasing bridge building materials.

IX. Next Meeting

The next SOSTC meeting is scheduled for Monday November 15th 2021 at 7:00 PM.

X. Adjournment

8:20 pm. Motion to adjourn by Patrice Carson, seconded by Joan Sears. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Bailey

Secretary