

## **Town Forest Committee**

8/9/13

**Present:** Sue Barnett, Peter Brewer, Paul Doucette, Shirley Smith and Bill Dakai

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 AM. Peter made a motion to approve the minutes from July 12<sup>th</sup> as amended. Sue seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

### **Big Wall Mystery**

Shirley related that she had been talking to Val, the Park Ranger at River Bend, about the Mendon Town Forest. She mentioned how we were trying to figure out the purpose of this 10 foot high big wall, part of which looked like a road. Val said he was familiar with it and it was part of an abandoned road. There was a road that was abandoned in 1870 but it was on the northerly side of the forest. The wall and road segment in question is on the southerly side, not far from the lookout tower. So the history of this particular site is still unknown.

### **Topographic Map**

Bill has been working on this project and has been in contact with Amanda Lewis of DCR.

He reported that he needs 4 copies to send in with the application.

### **Parking Lot Quote**

Bill and Mike Salvador had looked into the best location for a parking area. The terrain in the Town Forest presented obstacles to finding a flat, level space for parking. . Originally, it was thought that a location near the fire tower would be best but Mike Salvador thought an area further up Tower Road nearer the Dance Hall foundation would be more suitable. This would necessitate a 150 foot access road to a 75 X 50 foot gravel parking lot. Mike submitted a proposal for \$25,000 and the committee agreed that this was a reasonable price.

### **Gates Quote**

Sue had come up with 3 prices for pipe gates that ranged from about \$900 to \$1,150. The \$900 quote included one lock post and the committee thought one post would be all that was needed.

The quotes evidently did not include installation. Bill suggested that he might possible be able to do this or it could be done by a local contractor. Using the Trail Map, the committee reviewed the proposed locations for the gates. Sue said she would look into the matter further.

### **Brochures Quote**

Shirley had contacted Amanda to find out if the grant covered brochures. Amanda said yes, it did but they had to be referred to as interpretive material, not educational. She also said we could request between 5 and 10 thousand brochures. Shirley got quotes from Minuteman Press in Milford. The price for 5000 8 and 1/2 trifold, on glossy paper would be \$700. If Minuteman Press were to do the formatting, the price would be \$800. The price for 10,000 brochures would be \$1,080. Based on his experience with brochures for Southwick Zoo, Peter thought the quote to be quite reasonable.

Shirley had tried to find out how many brochures would be needed for the Town Forest and had asked Mike Francis, Superintendent of the Trustees of Reservations about this. He said that Cormier Woods goes through 1000 a year but, if we plan to drop them off at other locations,

We should double that number.

### **Mass Historical Commission**

Since several historic sites were within the boundaries of the Town Forest and we were seeking state funding, Shirley had learned that our application would be flagged for review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This would considerably delay the review. After talking to members of the Mendon Historical Commission, this could be avoided by filing a Project Notification Form. Shirley had gotten a copy of this form from Amy DeWitt and had it all filled out and ready to mail. The only thing she needed was a photocopy of the pertinent section of the U.S.G.S. map that was to be included with the submission. Bill said he could supply this.

### **Brick Kiln**

There was some discussion of a possible brick kiln site in the Town Forest. There is a Taft's brick Kiln shown on the Wigwam Brook tributary a short distance off Millville St. Shirley said these brick kilns were usually temporary structures, a roof supported by 4 posts, built for the purpose of making bricks for one particular dwelling. It would be highly unlikely that, after 180 years, any remnants would remain. Paul thought he had seen a site that may have been a brick kiln but decided to wait until early November to investigate. Thompson Taft's house was made of brick and built around 1831 so the kiln may have been constructed for that purpose.

### **Wetlands**

Bill reported that there was at least one trail crossing that involved a wetland. He suggested a boardwalk crossing and said he would get a cost estimate. Both Bill and Shirley agreed this would require going to the Conservation Commission for a Determination of Applicability prior to submitting the application. Shirley is familiar with the process and will ask to be placed on the Conservation Commission agenda in the near future. Bill agreed to attend the meeting.

### **Potential Connection to 100 Acres**

Nothing definite on this acquisition of 100 acres south of Lake Nipmuc, but should it become a reality, Shirley had been informed by Anne Mazar and Patrice Murphy that they would work to obtain easements to connect this land to the Town Forest. The land contains 2 miles of maintained cart paths and trails with access on Kinsley Lane and frontage on Millville St., 2300 feet of Meadow Brook, a Great Blue Heron Rookery, and a vernal pool.

### **Camping**

The subject of camping was briefly discussed. There is evidently a severe shortage of camping facilities in the area. It was decided that this could be a future project but not feasible at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Smith