

Town Forest Committee
10/11/13

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 AM. Sue made a motion to approve the minutes from September 11th and Paul seconded the motion. There was a mistake in the gates quote. This was corrected, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Meeting with Board of Selectmen

Shirley and Paul informed the committee about their meeting with the selectmen on Sept. 23rd. Shirley explained to the selectmen about how the committee had been working on a DCR grant of up to \$50,000 for a parking lot, trails signs, kiosks, brochures, etc. She pointed out that, although at one time, the forest area was a focal point of recreational activity, today few people know of its existence. The committee hopes to change that and a long term goal is to connect.....

Selectman Mike Goddard asked if the committee could put a link on the Town web site with historical background information. Paul already has a lot of material and knowledge on this subject and volunteered to do the project. Shirley gave him some assistance. It has just been completed and will soon be posted on the Town website.

Meeting with Community Preservation Committee

Shirley told the committee that the Community Preservation Committee had voted to place an article on the November 19th Special Town Meeting warrant to award \$8000 of CPA funds to put towards the required 20% matching funds for the DCR grant. In kind volunteer labor will make up the difference.

Meeting with Conservation Commission

Shirley and Bill met with the Conservation Commission to file a Request for Determination of Applicability. This is in regard to the 40 foot wooden plank walkway to cover a muddy place on one of the proposed trails. The commissioners must decide if the project has any impact on wetlands. Bill presented pictures of a similar walk and answered questions. This had to be advertised in the paper and we have not yet heard back on the decision.

Eagle Scout Project

Shirley related that she had attended a meeting at Paul's house with Paul, Josh Luttrell and his mother, Sharron. She was very impressed with Josh. Josh would like to be involved in the Town Forest to work toward obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Paul said Josh would be ready to begin in the spring. He had taken Josh into the forest to show him some of the work that needed to be done such as clearing brush from historic foundations.

Easement Trail Map for Massachusetts Historical Commission

MHC had requested a map of trails through the two Southwick easements. Shirley presented a color copy of the map to the committee. It also showed the location of the proposed parking area. The committee was very pleased with the map and thought Bill had done an excellent job.

DCR Grant Application

Gates quote and discussion: Sue presented pictures and a quote from Howes Welding in Hopedale. With the lock box, the gates would cost \$2600 each. She said it was the lock box that made them so expensive. The committee figured that \$3000 could be saved by using a heavy chain and padlock rather than the lock box. Peter pointed out that, in his experience, these can rust and be problematic. Shirley didn't think people would go to the bother to cut through a chain. The committee decided to go with the gates without the lock box at a cost of \$1,580 each.

Sue reported that the fire department was okay with the gates being locked as long as they had a key. Also she had been to Millville and learned that there was no objection to putting a Town Forest sign at the Tower Road entrance which is in Millville. The road crosses the Town line and is in Mendon a short way up.

Picnic Table Estimate

Shirley had put together an estimate for two cedar picnic tables at a total of \$564 each or \$1129 for both. She said that one of them had to be handicapped accessible. It was agreed that this detail could be dealt with later and that, for the purpose of the grant, this estimate would suffice.

Costs of Tools, Entrance Signs, and Materials for Trail Signs, Kiosks and Plank Walkway

Bill had given Shirley copies of all the work he had done. This included 7 pages of pictures, itemized lists of materials and volunteer labor. The committee was impressed with the thoroughness and detail of the lists. Peter will use the kiosk figures in the construction of the kiosk he is donating.

Southwick Easements

Peter will have his lawyer draw up a legal easement as required by DCR in time for the next meeting. He said he will use Bill's easement trail map and asked if Bill could supply GPS coordinates. Shirley said she would ask Bill if he could do that.

Since Peter will be away for part of November, the committee decided to set the next meeting for November 18th.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Smith