

Town of Harpswell  
Recreation Committee Meeting  
February 1, 2016

**Attendees:** Sue Rich, Don Miskill, Ray Sohl, Rick Meisenbach, David Brooks, Tony Barrett, and Monique Coombs.

Also present: Gina Perow Rick Daniels (Selectman), and Reed Coles (HHLT).

**A quorum was present when the meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.**

**Meeting Minutes:** The November 2, 2015 minutes were approved with corrections [5-0-2].

**Old Business:**

- **Action item: Devil’s Back Trail Plan for east side [Don M.]**
- **Action item: Cliff Trail – Replace broken and rotted bridge boards, build additional bog bridges at Henry’s Creek, reflective paint for the blazes, and blaze the cutoff trail reroute.**
- **Action item: Erect roadside sign for the Giant Stairs, and repaint the GS bike rack.**
- **Action item: Make laminated “You are here” maps for the Devil’s Back and Cliff Trails.**
- **Action item: Develop an Other Power Driven Mobility Devices [OPDMD] Policy for town trails.**
- **Action item: Permanent maps at trailheads or map cards and QR codes.**
- **Action item: DOGPOT station at Mackerel Cove.**

**New Business:**

- **New Committee Member** – Welcomed Monique Coombs. She is the Seafood Program Director for the Maine Coast Fisherman’s Association, and is working as a communications assistant for the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust’s Otter Brook Capital Campaign.
- **Otter Brook Corridor Project Phase II Capital Campaign:**
  - Reed Coles, Executive Director for the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, gave a presentation on the capital campaign to purchase two adjacent properties in the Otter Brook Corridor. Otter Brook Farms LLC is 29 acres and the Alexander Family has offered 39 acres for sale. They both lie along the west side of the brook itself. Total projected cost is \$495,000 covering purchase, transaction and stewardship costs. This is an important focus area as it provides a protected wildlife transit corridor, forest buffer for the brook itself and protects the marine water quality where the brook drains into Harpswell Cove. It protects a significant wetlands area and will have a trail system. Tremendous recreational benefits
  - This is a unique and rare purchase opportunity and HHLT asked the town for \$100,000 in support of the purchase. The Budget Advisory Committee recommended \$75,000 this year and they can ask for an additional \$25,000 next year to control budget growth. This would represent ½ of 1% of the town’s assessed land value.
  - Tony indicated the Conservation Commission has developed an Open Space Plan that indicates 60% of the land in Harpswell is undeveloped. Numerous studies indicate that land conservation supports town economic development and is cheaper to do.
  - There will be a presentation on the project Tuesday, March 1 at 5:30 PM at the town office. It will be a panel discussion about recreation, Nature, Conservation, fishing and tourism. Darcie Couture will be participating.
  - Reed asked for the committee’s support for the project. A motion was made and approved [6-0-2].

**Motion: The Recreation Committee supports the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust’s request to the town for \$75,000 and supports the Otter Brook Corridor Project – Phase II.**

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- **Town Event at Mitchell Field:**
  - July 16, 2016, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and Bean Supper.
  - Don will confirm with Eric Field.
  - We need a name for the event and a rain date.
  - Vendors will be seafood related. Trying for local vendors. Need to comply with HSP rules and licensing requirements. Hoping for fresh seafood.
  - Harpswell Community Television will be asked to broadcast live at the event.
- **Devil's Back East Shore Trail** – We've done quite a bit along the shoreline trail section since the weather has been so mild. Will do more as weather dictates. Should be okay for a National Trails Day opening.
- **Town Office Kiosk** – The main sign for MF is done and delivered. All of the materials for both kiosks has been purchased and delivered to Dave Brooks' barn. They will go up in the spring. Still need a location for the town office kiosk. Need to decide on the recreation-related signs.
- **Work Party Assessments** – As soon as the weather warms, we will do surveys of all the town properties, develop an action list and schedule the work trips. Don will coordinate with Chris Coffin for the Giant Stairs survey.
- **Programs Update:**
  - **Learn to Ski** – Great positive changes at Lost Valley, 65 people registered.
  - **Basketball** – Almost finished at HCS. Travel teams still playing. Had (2) 5/6 girls, (1) 5/6 boys, (1 each) ¾ girls & boys.
  - **Karate** – 16 children for Jan – Mar session.
  - **Basketball FUNDamentals** - (full, 20 each) pre-K & Kindergarten.
  - **Spring registrations** just released - **Tennis Academy, Baseball, Softball, T-Ball & X-Country**
  - **(New) Ready, Set, Run** - (ages 10 -16) A little more focused program for older kids and HCA students. Distance is 5K, 10-12 weeks, 2 practices per week. Gina has a coach. Want to sustain our running interest without impacting the Harriers X-Country program. Will hold our races at Mitchell Field. Also have the St. John's Bazaar 5K in June.
- **Mitchell Field Update** – Don briefed the committee on the following issues:
  - **Wood Chip Business** - There was a proposal before the BoS for a wood chip transfer station at MF. There would be 25 – 30 trucks per day during the week delivering wood chips for staging. A conveyor system would transfer the chips onto vessels at the pier for shipment. The MF Committee did not endorse this proposal. It was not marine-related. The conveyor would have impacted the causeway and boat launch, and established a height restriction for boats along the waterfront road. And, the pier would require significant upgrades to handle the vessels.
  - **HCA Propeller Project** – They are proposing some sort of facility for the MF Business Zone that would serve as an incubator for student projects such as, boats, aquaculture [both onshore and in water], solar power, etc. They have stated there are corporate funding interests and are working with the BoS on a written proposal. They would also like to use part of the Admin Building.
  - There was a **proposal to include the Admin Building in the MF Business Zone** but that was not taken up by the MF Committee as it could preclude public uses such as library, public restrooms, showers for beach goers and possible offices for Harbormaster, MF staff, or recreation staff.
  - **Recommendations of the MF Cmte for the Waterfront.** The full report is available online. They are recommending that the pier be removed and replaced at a later date with something suited to uses envisioned at the field such as a ramp float system or wooden pier structure. They also propose an all-tide, two wide boat launch facility. This would require some traffic pattern changes at the waterfront to separate trailer traffic for the boat launch from beach goers. It is possible with the addition of a small road section to the north of the admin building. The entrance to MF would also require some adjustments since the site lines to the north are less than ideal to

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keep it safe. The two primary alternatives are to reduce the speed from 45 to 30 mph, or move the entrance road closer to the fire station where the driveway remains from the two former houses then route it down behind the sentry building and back onto the main road.

- **Costs to remove or remediate the pier** are about the same at \$3.5 – \$4 M. The boat launch cost is currently \$330,000. These expenditures would have to be approved by future town-wide votes.
  - **Town Lands Committee** has voiced some reservations about the boat launch proposal saying that the money could be better spent improving existing boat landings with insufficient parking being the primary concern. They are recommending a comprehensive strategic plan for all the boat landings in the town. While the MF Cmte supports that proposal, we are tasked to implement the MF Master Plan and the boat launch facility is part of that plan. We have been working on this for a year and have completed our work to this point in time. The BoS will make a final determination as to whether or not to proceed.
  - There are **four warrant articles** for Mitchell Field, three dealing with the MF Cmte's report:
    - Art 31 – is the standard maintenance and operating budget for the field of \$11,300 with an additional \$22,000 line item for removal of the water tower.
    - Art 32 – Asks for a vote to adopt the committee's report. It is a refinement of the original MF Master Plan. It does not make any substantive changes but merely provides more detail. The article is worded exactly the same as the original Master Plan adoption article in that a vote to adopt does not commit the town to expend any funds.
    - Art 33 – Asks for \$150,000 to complete removal of the pier pump house that fell into the water last year. Some debris has been removed but everything must come out of the water. The town has the necessary permits. Any unspent funds will go into an account for repairs or capital expenditures.
    - Art 34 – Asks for \$30,000 for consulting services related to the recommendations in the MF committee's report. These would update designs and refine costs for town votes.
- **Action items Review** – No changes.

**Handouts:**

- HHLT *The Otter Brook Corridor Project – Phase II* brochure.
- Mitchell Field Committee Report, *Recommendations for Improvements to the Waterfront at Mitchell Field*, dated November 20, 2015 [via email].
- Waterfront report diagrams of Pier, boat launch road access and front entrance road access.

**Next Meeting:**

- Recreation Committee meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Town Office.
- Recreation Committee meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Town Office.
- Recreation Committee meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Town Office.

**The Recreation Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Miskill, Secretary