

Town of Harpswell
Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 09, 2019, 7:00pm

Committee Members in Attendance: Tony Barrett, David Brooks, Tom Carr, Susan Rich, Jeanie Rubio, Rick Rumba

Also in Attendance: Gina Perow, Recreation Director and Kayla Matthews, Programs Assistant

A quorum of Committee Members was present when the meeting was called to order at 7:08pm.

Meeting Minutes: The DRAFT minutes for the May 13, 2019 Committee meeting were approved as written.

Old Business:

1. **Cliff Trail Improvements:** A contingency of Recreation Committee members and Staff met on June 3, 2019 to discuss the possibility of upgrading and improving the accessibility of a portion of the Cliff Trail. Those present at the Special Meeting all agreed that current the condition of the Cliff Trail from the Town Office parking lot to the cascades is currently in poor condition (mud, roots, etc.) and needs to be upgraded. Tony Barrett led a discussion of the various options for upgrading the trail and opportunities for professional assistance and potential assistance with funding. Following some discussion, it was agreed that:
 1. The first 2500 feet of the Cliff Trail (Town Office parking lot to the cascades) would benefit from upgrading;
 2. It may be beneficial to consider upgrading that portion of the trail to make it safer and more accessible to those with limited mobility;
 3. The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) should be consulted to assist with the planning and budgeting process, and that funds are available in the Trails Budget to cover the cost of having MCC develop a plan and budget for the upgrades.Tony and Gina agreed to contact MCC and work with them to develop a plan and budget for the trail upgrade project. The work was completed, and a detailed trail upgrade assessment report and budget were provided to the Committee on August 30. In addition, Gina reported that she, Tony, Tom and Dave met with a contingency of the Selectmen on August 29 to walk the section of the Cliff Trail and discuss the improvement plan. The 3 selectmen present were supportive of moving forward with the proposed improvements.
2. **Other Trail Work:** Tony reported that he weedwacked the brush on the west side of Route 24 across from the Devils Back Trail parking lot to make it easier for vehicles to see crossing pedestrians. Tim Vale removed a large tree that creating a potential hazard at Devils Back.

New Business:

1. **New Committee Member:** Gina introduced our new Committee member, Jeannie Rubio.
2. **Cliff Trail Accessibility Improvements and RTP Grant Application:** Tony led a discussion of the plan, the budget and grant funding opportunities. While everyone present agreed that improvements to this section of the trail were necessary, there was some discussion regarding whether or not upgrading the trail to meet universally acceptable trail standards would change the overall character and quality of the trail or lead to other issues such as increased noise, litter, vandalism, etc. While some members were still questioning the extent of the proposed upgrades,

all Committee members agreed that we should continue to move forward with the project. In addition, the assessment report from MCC assumed that the trail would be upgraded to make it approximately 3 feet wide. A discussion followed, and it was agreed that if the plan were to be implemented, it would be advantageous to widen it to 4 feet. ***A motion was made to ask MCC to provide a written cost estimate to make the trail 4 feet wide. The motion was seconded and approved.*** Tony will ask MCC to provide the revised cost estimate. Once the revised cost estimate is received, Tony and Gina will bring the proposal to the September 12 Selectmen's meeting to ask for approval to proceed and apply for grants to assist in funding the project.

Tony also suggested that that the best opportunity for funding the trail improvement project may be the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands, Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant. The grants will fund up to 80% of a proposed project that is accepted for grant assistance. Applications for the grant are due September 27, 2019 at 5:00pm. Gina and Tony distributed copies of the grant application and asked if committee members could assist in preparing sections of the application to assure it is completed and submitted on time. For the application, the Committee agreed that Tony should be listed as the project manager, and Gina listed as the Town Representative. Tony and Gina agreed that they will take the lead on preparing the grant application with assistance from Committee members. In addition, since some matching funds will be required, it was agreed that we ask the Town Budget Committee to appropriate funds in next year's budget request. ***A motion was made to ask the Town Budget Committee to utilize the Recreation Dept. carryover funds as well as some additional town funds in next year's budget request to be used to help fund the trail upgrade project. The motion was seconded and approved.***

3. **Recent Trail Rescue Operations and Opportunities for Improvement:** Gina reported that there were two emergencies on the Cliff Trail this summer that required assistance from Town Emergency Response Teams. During the most recent emergency, the injured party needed to be manually transported off of the trail, and the emergency responders had a difficult time locating her and then safely transporting her. As a result, the OBIFD Fire Chief, Ben Wallace, suggested that: 1) a numbering system with signs be implemented on the Cliff Trail such that people requiring assistance can better identify their approximate location, and 2) the trail be improved/widened to allow emergency responders better access and easier & quicker transport. Gina suggest that we consider numbering and placing signs at each of the trail intersections along the cliff trail to improve trail location. In addition, the Fire Chief said he would prepare a letter of support for our trail improvement grant application from the perspective of improving emergency response.
4. **Fall Programs (Youth and Adult):** (Discussion of these items were postponed until our next meeting).
5. **Other:** Gina and Kayla are planning a Volunteer Appreciation Cookout, scheduled for Saturday, September 14 at Trufant-Summerton Athletic Field. Also, there was some discussion regarding creating a new sign at the beginning of the Cliff Trail clarifying the rules for building fairy houses as well as possibly excluding all wheeled vehicles from the trail.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2019 @ 7:00pm at the Town Office

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rumba, Secretary