

Strafford Conservation Commission Meeting
May 26, 2020
Morrill Education Center
Draft Minutes

Present: Micki Colbeck, Kate Root, Steve Wilbanks, Dave Paganelli, Mike Hebb, Chuck Sherman. Also present: Tim McCormick, Old City Falls (OCF) Caretaker and Pat Kelly, Strafford Select Board member.

Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and approved.

Old City Falls Recreation Area: Tim has been awaiting guidance as to when and how to officially open the OCF Nature Area, taking into consideration Covid-19 and the Governor's Emergency Orders. We discussed specific sign language that Tim will post when he opens the area. Chuck offered to compose these for us and have the Town Clerk print them out. (Thank you, Chuck!) We will have a number of them made up and post them also at other SCC recreational areas. Details at Old City Falls to include: limit on gathering numbers, social distancing, sanitizing surfaces, cautions on outhouse use, quarantine reminder for out- of-state folks, and courtesy when passing others on the paths.

Officer Elections:

Chair will be Steve Willbanks.

Vice chair will be Kate Root.

Secretary will be Kate Root.

NOTE: Jared Jensich has resigned and we all should be on the lookout for a replacement.

Whiterock Trail: Voted to officially accept this trail as part of our Cross-Town Trail System. Thank you to Mike for heading up this big project. Many reports of usage to date.

Whitcomb Hill Work- Dave and Mike will be working on marking the boundaries this Friday.

Emerald Ash Borer Management Discussion: Bob Wilson identified roughly 1,200 ash trees of significant size within town's ROW. Selectboard put \$5,000 into a fund for tree removal. Dave recommends that the town develop a plan to go forward. Town road crew should be cutting some accessible trees every year. The cost over time will be significant to the town, so he feels we should get a working plan in place now. He will be meeting with the Selectboard soon about this. A discussion regarding whether landowners or the Town owns the land and trees within the ROW ensued. It was greed that the Town's attorney, Paul Gillies, should be consulted on this matter. Point of interest: Mike has realized that due to the use of less accurate mapping methods, he figures the Whiterock trail segment is roughly 25% longer than he previously had thought and therefore the Strafford trail-system is likely considerably longer than we have assumed.

Wetlands; No new news.

Ashley Forest update; Dave Paganelli said that the survey is almost complete. He reports that a ROW from Sharon entering the property from the south has been identified, but it is not yet official. The scheduling of trail-work on the property and connecting to other trails is likely to be delayed due to Covid-19.

New business: Next meeting will be June 23.

Micki and Kate will bring citronella candles so we can meet outside again and not be eaten alive by bugs!

Respectfully submitted by Kate Root