Wolcott Forest Stewardship Committee

Notes from general meeting on Thursday, August 14, 2025
6 pm – 8:00 pm

Attending: Cate, Gordon, Jack, Gabe, Owen Thurston, Luke
Online: Roger, Bradley
Quorum? yes

Agenda

1. Call to order (6:18 pm)
2. Organizational actions
    a. Amendments to agenda
        i. Jack requested time to report regarding the Smith property
    b. Approve minutes from last meeting (7/10)
        i. Gabe moved to approve the minutes from 7/10, and Cate seconded.
            1. Yes (4), no (0), abstain (0); motion passes
3. Public comment
    a. None
4. Ongoing (6:10 pm)
    a. Update on the Smith property
        i. Jack reported that the Smith property has been cleared by the estate executor, but not by probate court, yet. The donation of the property to the town is likely to be approved once reviewed.
        ii. The current plan is to subdivide it. A 2-acre parcel with the current residence, would be put up for sale. These funds would be used to build a parking area near the road with a kiosk, a trail into the town forest border and to establish a management fund for the 53 ½ acre parcel donated to the town. Any remaining funds could be used to form an Alton Smith conservation fund.

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iii. The donated parcel will be preserved by amending the existing easement, which has already been approved, and the existing hunting camp will be removed.

iv. They are presenting to the Select Board next Wednesday; would like an answer before going to the probate court, but not sure if that's possible. They are asking for support from WFSC at that meeting. **Gabe agreed to present, with Gordon as backup.**

v. The Committee discussed possibilities for running a trail along the border of the property to bypass the wetlands.

vi. **A motion was made by Gordon to recommend to the selectboard to accept the offer as presented by NRLT. Cate seconded.**

a. **Yes (4), no (0), abstain (0)**

b. Trail-building update

i. Sinuosity's work has been completed, except for signage and trail maps.

c. Maintenance update

i. There was a request to add field mowing to the town's cemetery-mowing contract. **Roger will follow up with Belinda, find out who has the contract, could use management funds. Also, we will explore options for brush hogging.**

ii. We discussed opening the bridge gate, parking on that side of E Elmore Rd, and adding trail crossing signs on either side.

iii. **Roger, will meet with Phil to discuss clearing the trail from the school to the edge of school property.**

d. Forest management update

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i. Site mapping of water quality concerns
    1. Luke is setting a meeting to go over the scope of work. The project is getting a lot of publicity and is attracting more interest. He will prepare the grant application once the work scope is established.

e. Upcoming events
    i. Town BBQ
        1. We will have a table at the town BBQ. **Roger will set up the table, and other are welcome to set in.** Maybe we can have townsfolk vote on the trail names at the BBQ.
    ii. Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony
        1. The ceremony planning is proceeding on schedule. The next planning session is next week.

5. New business (7:30 pm)
    a. Trail names and signage
        1. We discussed naming trails and will continue the discussion at our next meeting.
    ii. Memorials
        1. Rhoda Bedell, Leon, others?
6. We agreed to move our next meeting to September 4th, with the goal of finalizing trail names with enough lead time to print materials for the grand opening.
7. Adjourn (8:00 pm)