Attendees: Bob Brown, Denny Nackoney, Diane Hall, Eric Sofen, Joan Gaughan, Steve Park
Absent: Laura Robert (NRC Liaison), Ekaterina Zemlyakova, Jeff Zupan, John Schuler
Guests: Jay Prosnitz
Location: Outdoors on the lawn behind Town Hall

Town Clerk KC Kato joined us to swear in the present members for another year of service.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.
A motion to approve the meeting minutes for June 16, 2021, was made by Joan and was followed by a second from Diane. The vote carried unanimously.

Steve reported in place of Jeff on the Mobility Committee. Jeff’s feedback on “Mobility matrix” for the NRC Open Space Plan was to recommend making various trail priorities medium term rather than long term. Denny added feedback on the Mobility Matrix that the suggested in-line crossing of the Cochituate Aqueduct path at Rt-9 was rendered not feasible and too costly by a recent study, and so Denny recommended removing it from the Matrix. The Trails Committee supports identifying a liaison at DCR because a lot of our trails overlap with DCR property. The Trails Committee also supports improving road crossings for safety.

Denny shared recent feedback and issues with the North 40 trail changes. As part of remediation of old town dump site, we moved a trail over approximately 100 ft. The DPW has closed the old trail. Some neighbors emailed Trails to asked about the closure and were appreciative of the explanation. Denny is working with DPW to close a couple more cut-through trails.

At Centennial Park, our recent closures of extra trails are working. Signs are staying in place with a bit of maintenance. Joan reports that closed trails are growing in nicely, thanks to the rainy summer. The closed trail by the Elizabeth Seton Residence is still an issue with someone repeatedly taking ropes down and new vegetation not growing in. We discussed recommendations from the AMC and Bill Giezentanner for improving trail conditions on the upper meadow. The key recommendations are extending the curves out further to decrease grade and adding several grade reversals to shed water. We will continue to monitor how it looks going into winter. We may add another rope line after vegetation dies back but before the ground freezes to minimize short-cutting of the curves during the winter.

Denny is looking for another Eagle Scout to do a bog bridge project at Boulder Brook.

Steve reported on a letter from Marianne Cooley, Secretary of the Board of Trustees in the Office of the President at Wellesley College requesting that unmarked trails on College property be removed from our trail maps as a remedy for trail damage from “off-road biking.” The Trails Committee suggests a more effective remedy is to offer to assist in removing the various jumps and unsanctioned trails because those building them are probably not referencing town trail maps, as we’ve come to understand from similar activity elsewhere in town. We would like the trails to remain on the map for other trail users. Steve will draft a response letter.

Steve, Eric, and Denny reported on the site visit at Williams Street office park where we are considering an extension of the Charles River Trail to toward Boylston Street as a part of our next 5-year plan. This
project will involve partnership with DCR and possibly John Hancock. This trail extension could enhance lacking pedestrian infrastructure for the newly constructed residential development there.

The next site visit for consideration in the 5-year plan will be for the “Hundreds Trail,” an on-road connection between Brown Park and Carisbrooke on Sept. 12th at 9 am.

Steve is organizing a trail work day with Jessica Stanton of the Wellesley Service League as a part of a WSL project at Barton Road. Trails Committee will participate in partnership with local residents and the Service League to do trail cleanup and maintenance in late September/early October. Steve will follow up on Denny’s recommendation to revisit the liability waiver for trail work volunteers.

Fall trail walks have been scheduled and announced. COVID-19 concerns were discussed – walks may be revised or cancelled if public health guidance changes.

The self-guided walks from the past year seem to have been successful. 450 of the 500 pamphlets were taken.

The draft budget for FY23 proposes a $200 increase from $8500 to $8700 to cover additional repair and maintenance work. Joan moved to approve the budget, Denny seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Jay Prosnitz has attended three meetings and volunteered at two trail work days. The committee unanimously voted to have him join the committee. Steve will request the NRC Commissioners appoint him to the Trails Committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.


Submitted by,
Eric Sofen,
Secretary, Wellesley Trails Committee