Freeport Conservation Commission

Date: 3-8-2022

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Freeport Community Center

Attendees: Catherine Carroll, Margaret Gerber, Ryan Buke, Anna Cudmore, Matt McLaughlin, Mark Morrissey, Ben Shepard, Thomas Berry, Jason Berry, Jim Berry, Tawni Whitney, Eric Mushil, Stuart Johnson, Peter Featherstone, Matt Warner

Absent: John Stroud

1. Approve minutes from February meeting
   1. Ben Shepard made motion to approve
   2. Matt McLaughlin seconded
   3. Minutes approved unanimously
2. Thomas Berry Eagle Project
   1. Thomas Berry is in Troop 41 Boy Scouts out of Portland, working toward becoming an Eagle Scout
   2. Thomas Berry goes to Freeport High School and lives next to Florida Lake
   3. Thomas Berry proposes to construct at Florida Lake
      1. Kiosk at new Baker Road entrance
      2. Two benches along north end of lake
   4. Thomas Berry looking to work with Home Depot to donate materials
      1. Plus there are left over materials for the kiosk installed at Hidden Pond that can be utilized
   5. Thomas Berry to utilize father and other volunteer labor to do work
      1. Conservation Commission offered to help
      2. Town of Freeport newsletter and Friends if Florida Lake can be utilized to advertise for volunteer labor
   6. Next steps
      1. Thomas Berry and Ben Shepard to walk property to place benches and kiosk
      2. Thomas Berry to procure materials and construct items
      3. Thomas Berry to let Ben Shepard know when construction work will occur on-site in order to coordinate volunteer labor
   7. Matt McLaughlin made motion to accept Thomas Berry’s proposal
      1. Catherine Carroll seconded
      2. Approved unanimously
3. Property Updates:
   1. Florida Lake
      1. Martin Samelson – Canoe Put In
         1. Martin Samelson reached out to Ben Shepard via email about installing a canoe put-in at Florida Lake
         2. Martin Samelson not in attendance, so this item was tabled
4. Mark Morrisey feedback on trail bridges
   1. Matt Morrisey looking for a more natural looking trials and not over building trails with bridging using dimensional wood
   2. Ben Shepard had concerns about lumber Mark Morrisey donated to Florida Lake in 2021 as it is uneven, has many knots, is not uniform in thickness and would be difficult to build bridges with,
      1. Both agreed the lumber can be cut up and laid directly on trails in muddy areas at Florida Lake
   3. Need to balance natural looking trails versus making trails safe and accessible to all trail users, plus protecting wetland areas
5. NEMBA Site Walk Follow Up
   1. Margaret Gerber did a site walk with NEMBA about the proposed mountain bike trails at Hedgehog
      1. Maine Trail Builders construction company in attendance
      2. Discussed parking, long term maintenance and trail building methods
   2. Since December, NEMBA received a financial contribution for the work from LL Bean
      1. Seeking support from Harraseeket Inn and Zachau Construction as well
   3. NEMBA and Freeport Chamber of Commerce want to go in front of the Town Council before the end of March to approve a plan at Hedgehog for the mountain bike trails
   4. NEMBA shared a map of the proposed mountain bike trails which are attached to the minutes
      1. The purple square on the map is a junction for various trails
      2. About 6.2 miles of trails proposed
   5. Maine Trail Builders and NEMBA answered questions from the Conservation Commission
      1. Proposed four arch bridges to go over the Stonewall Trail, so hikers can pass beneath mountain bike trails
      2. Proposed a separate viewpoint at the summit for the mountain bikers
      3. Parking
         1. Idea to utilize Pownal Road parking and establish that as a welcoming entrance for mountain bikers
            1. There would be a trail from the Pownal Road field to the rest of the Hedgehog property
      4. Long term maintenance
         1. NEMBA would consider a Memorandum of Understanding regarding long term maintenance of the trails
      5. Will there be issues with dog walkers (unleashed dogs) and conflicts with hikers?
         1. Maine Trail Builders tries to design trails to manage hiker and mountain biker contacts, and keep mountain bike trails away from existing hiking trails
      6. Connectivity to other parts of Freeport
         1. Idea to connect Hedgehog to downtown via a trails going toward Exit 20 or 22 on I-295
      7. Idea to locate pump track near transfer station and landfill
      8. How are existing maintenance relationships with other trails?
         1. In Gorham, NEMBA has volunteer days
         2. At Bradbury Mountain, they also have volunteer days where 30-40 people typically show up
            1. At Bradbury, light maintenance generally works well with the State. Whom oversees the property

Heavier maintenance requires more approval from the State to do the work

* 1. Not sure about permitting requirements for the proposed mountain bike trails
     1. Need to confirm with the Town
     2. There are a few rare and endangered plant species at Hedgehog per the existing Hedgehog Mountain Management Plan
  2. NEMBA has a goal to construct the work in 2022
     1. Construction season mid-April to November
  3. Request from NEMBA to Conservation Commission
     1. Continue to work with Conservation on project scope
     2. Continue on a path to present a plan to the Town Council
        1. NEMBA wants to present to the Town Council before the end of March
     3. Conduct site walk at Bartol Island with the Conservation Commission
  4. After NEMBA, Freeport Chamber of Commerce and Maine Trail Builders left the meeting, the Conservation Commission deliberated NEMBA’s proposed plan for Hedgehog Mountain
     1. Ben Shepard made motion to not accept current plan presented to the Conservation Commission by NEMA to install mountain bike trails
        1. Catherine Carroll seconded
           1. Motion made based on the following feedback to NEMBA’s plan

Need more public input on change of uses at Hedgehog Mountain

Need more time to develop a detailed plan between NEMBA and the Conservation Commission to ensure no negative impacts to existing uses, and adequate facilitates for mountain bikers

2022 construction too aggressive to work this out

* + - * 1. Those voting in favor of the motion

Ben Shepard, Catherine Carroll

* + - * 1. Those voting against the motion

Ryan Burke, Margaret Gerber, Anna Cudmore and Matt McLaughlin

* + - * 1. Motion failed
    1. Matt McLaughlin made motion to not move this current plan forward to the Town Council, but to continue working with NEMBA to refine the plan proposed for Hedgehog
       1. Margaret Gerber seconded
       2. Those voting in favor of the motion
          1. Ryan Burke, Margaret Gerber, Anna Cudmore and Matt McLaughlin
       3. Those voting against the motion
          1. Ben Shepard, Catherine Carroll
       4. Motion passes

1. Meeting adjourned

Next meeting: April 12, 2022, 6:30pm at the Freeport Community Center