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By Karen Wilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 10:04 am, Jun 07, 2023

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Trails Sub-Committee

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Monday April 17, 2023

Northborough Trails Committee

Northborough Police Station Meeting Room

Minutes

Attendees: Brian Belfer, Bill Cobb, Craig Cox, Victor Jacek, David O'Toole, Mike Leonard

7:09 p.m. Bill opened the meeting. A vote was taken to approve the minutes from March 2023. Brian made a motion to accept the minutes and Craig seconded. The Minutes were accepted by vote.

Update on the Mount Pisgah fire

Brian gave an update on the Mount Pisgah fire, which started on the afternoon of Friday 4/14. On the afternoon of 4/14, Northborough FD reached out to various trails committee members for assistance. Brian had availability and responded to the Smith Road command post for the fire. The FD was looking for assistance with trail navigation. Mount Pisgah is comprised of trails on town land in Northborough and Berlin, many trails on private property, and many trails on Mass Wildlife land. Most available trail maps are incomplete and do not show all trails in one view. Given this challenge, Brian set the FD up with Trailforks, a popular mapping program and database, commonly used by mountain bikers at Mount Pisgah. Trailforks provided the most comprehensive view of trails throughout the burn area. From there, Brian worked together to direct crews throughout the burn area. Brian returned Saturday morning to setup Trailforks again with some new site leads and assisted staff in the mobile command center to get a printout of the trails in the area. Brian also accompanied field personnel on an ATV to survey some of the burn areas.

There was general discussion about GIS maps and their availability. David O'Toole mentioned that the town GIS has many inaccuracies and needs some updating. Brian discussed the town GIS and its maintenance and the fact that all trail maps could use an overhaul. Brian also brought up his effort to come up with some support for a consolidated, updated Mount Pisgah trail map. The fire experience has proven that the existing maps are incomplete.

Craig Cox brought up the fact that some down trees in the Mount Pisgah Mass Wildlife area are being used as jumps. The question was raised if we should remove them. The consensus of the group was that discretion around risk and safety should be used before removing.

Brian gave an update of the trails at Edmund Hill. With respect to the ongoing bridge replacements we have been doing, Craig felt that we should prioritize some other work over some of the remaining bridge replacements at Edmund. The muddy area on the northern section of the Bird Song trail was mentioned as a priority for bridge work. It was agreed to organize a trip out there to see what is needed. Craig also mentioned that there is a bridge need at Mount Pisgah on the Lyman road side. Brian suggested we engage SVT to see if they have the resources to replace those bridges. Brian agreed to email SVT on this

Craig brought up the Forest Management plans for Mount Pisgah and Edmund Hill. It was discussed that at the time, there were no respondents to the forester RFQ. Vinny asked Craig to assemble input from the committee for the RFQ. It was discussed to continue to join the Conservation Commission monthly meetings to stay in the loop with the forest management plan progress and status.

The safety of the public post-fire was discussed. Brian to talk to Vinny about the risk of the forest after the fire. Suggested a possible sign at the kiosk to provide a safety status for hikers. It was agreed for the committee to get out and survey and prioritize Pisgah fire damage in the coming week.

Bill gave an update on the rotten bridging on the Cherry street side of the Cold Harbor trail. Working to replace it largely with scrap lumber from our stock and possibly a few new pieces.

Brian brought up that he was still working on the Rawstron plaque to be placed at the Green street trailhead.

Bill made a motion to adjourn and Brian seconded. The committee adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Cobb, NTC member