



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Town Forest Committee Minutes

April 27, 2022, 7:00 PM

Members Present: Brian Forestal, Mike Jones, Brian McGrattan, Cathy Rooney, Rob St. Germain, Cara Hulme, Mike Morrissey

Members Absent: None

Public Present: None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2022

The Ashland Town Forest Committee (ATFC) reviewed and amended the meeting minutes of April 13, 2022. A motion was made to accept the meeting minutes as amended, and seconded. The minutes were approved by a roll call vote 5-0-0: Mr. Forestal: Aye, Mr. Jones: Aye, Mr. McGrattan: Aye, Ms. Rooney: Aye, Mr. St. Germain: Aye.

2. Expense submittals (if any) & Accounting Report

Mr. McGrattan presented an invoice from Philip Benjamin Forestry for \$975.00 for the Stewardship Plan. It was budgeted for \$980. Mr. Benjamin is coming to the ATFC meeting on May 11 to answer questions regarding the Stewardship Plan. Mr. St. Germain expressed interest in getting the check cut and cashed, so the ATFC could submit to the state for reimbursement before June 30, 2022. Ms. Rooney suggested that we should not vote on the invoice until the ATFC has had time to review the Stewardship Plan and ask Mr. Benjamin questions. Mr. McGrattan suggested the ATFC should pay the invoice for work completed, as this was a time and materials job and the time, 13 hours, has been expended.

Mr. St. Germain made a motion to have the check cut and held until the May 11 meeting, when Mr. Benjamin will answer ATFC questions. If the ATFC is satisfied, then Mr. St. Germain will hand the check to Mr. Benjamin at the May 11 meeting. The ATFC roll call vote was 5-0-0: Mr. Forestal: aye, Mr. Jones: aye, Mr. McGrattan: aye, Ms. Rooney: aye, Mr. St. Germain: aye.

Mr. McGrattan presented an invoice from Philip Benjamin Forestry for \$1,950 for consulting on tree planting. The report has been produced and sent to the ATFC for review. Mr. Benjamin will answer any questions regarding the project at the May 11 meeting. Ms. Rooney commented the map format was hard to read, and the deer exclosures were hard to see. Mr. St. Germain will try to overlay the trails on the Mr. Benjamin's map to make it more readable.

Minutes of the April 27, 2022, 7:00 PM, Meeting of the Town Forest Committee

Mr. St. Germain made a motion to pay Philip Benjamin Forestry \$1,950.00 for consulting on tree planting. The ATFC roll call vote was 5-0-0: Mr. Forestal: aye, Mr. Jones: aye, Mr. McGrattan: aye, Ms. Rooney: aye, Mr. St. Germain: aye.

Mr. St. Germain submitted an expense report for \$444.92 for cobblestones at the Oak Street entrance, to come from multiple accounts. Mr. Forestal and Ms. Rooney both raised concerns that these cobblestones were purchased without prior review by the ATFC.

The ATFC roll call vote was 5-0-0: Mr. Forestal: aye, Mr. Jones: aye, Mr. McGrattan: aye, Ms. Rooney: aye, Mr. St. Germain: aye.

Mr. Jones submitted receipts and an expense report for \$3,103.98 for trees, to be applied to the DCR grant. The ATFC roll call vote was 5-0-0: Mr. Forestal: aye, Mr. Jones: aye, Mr. McGrattan: aye, Ms. Rooney: aye, Mr. St. Germain: aye.

Mr. McGrattan asked a question about funds from the DCR Grant Funding for the Tree Replacement Project, the reforestation of the burn area project. Mr. St. Germain explained the DCR was a 75/25 grant, for \$11,063.62. The DCR has contributed \$8,297.25 (75%) and the town has to contribute \$2,766.37 (25%). The town's contribution is either in hard cash or labor at \$25 or \$30/hr. Mr. St. Germain said the ATFC has about \$5,000 in labor hours, at \$25/hr. from recent volunteer projects. The ATFC has to produce another \$1,045 hard cash or labor. The ATFC has the labor already from the 4/23 tree planting event. This allows the ATFC to use the CPC grant fund #4, to cover hard cash expenses. See appendix 1.

3. Wessels and Fairy House last minute needs & comments

April 30: Tom Wessels Event

Ms. Rooney says the Covid numbers are now close to 5%, and this is a concern for holding the event. Ms. Rooney will get masks for the event and have a sign made that attendees should wear masks.

Ms. Rooney will set up cones at the library and the Winter St. lot, the night before the event, to reserve parking spots for Mr. Wessels.

If the event is cancelled Ms. Rooney will ask Ms. Hulme for the e-vite list and Mina for the library attendee list and send out notifications to attendees.

May 7: Fairy House

Ms. Hulme put the first Fairy House at the entrance to the Winter St. lot, and it looks good. Ms. Hulme will need help on the morning of Thursday May 5 from 10 AM to 11:30 AM, to put the Fairy Houses out. The ATFC is welcomed to join in distributing the Fairy Houses. Ms. Hulme is expecting 40-50 hours and putting them in the loop from the Winter St. Lot to the Bungalow and back.

Ms. Hulme will post a message on the Facebook page.

The Girl Scout Troop is excited to help out, and they are putting flowers out next to the Fairy Houses to draw attention to the locations in the ATF.

4. Public Programs Advertising

Mr. St. Germain asked for help in setting up E-vite invitations for future events. Ms. Hulme volunteered to set up E-vite invitations for the upcoming public programs.

Mr. St. Germain is working with Ashley Place, Ashland's Communications and Cultural Coordinator, to get Public Program information posted on the Ashland Town website and calendar. Mr. St. Germain still needs event descriptions from Mr. Forestal.

Ms. Rooney asked that her two events, Plant ID Walk and the "Forest for All Walk" at the bottom of the public events list, be removed.

Mr. St. Germain asked for help with Facebook postings. Mr. Forestal will post the descriptions of the public programs on Facebook, that Mr. St. Germain sends to him.

5. Current Projects Review

Not Discussed.

6. Trail Creation/Relocation discussions

a. Guidelines

Mr. St. Germain sent out a missive on trail guidelines to the ATFC prior to the meeting. He indicated that Mr. St. Germain and Mr. Forestal have differences philosophies on trail design and location.

Mr. St. Germain asked if the ATFC is creating "bike trails that walkers are allowed to use," or "hiking trails that bikers can also use." Mr. McGrattan asked if the ATFC work towards a goal for both bikers and hikers, and not make it an "either or" decision.

Mr. Forestal outlined his experience in training and experience designing trails and how they are designed as multi-use trails, and not just "bike" trails.

Mr. Forestal outlined his suggested changes to section 1 of the proposed North Trail and the sustainability issues in section 1, including the steep grade of trail and drainage/erosion issues during heavy rains. Mr. Forestal walked through the area with Mr. Moulton and suggested changes that seemed reasonable. Mr. Forestal wrote this up but has not flagged his suggested trail. Mr. Forestal's suggested route would require a bridge to be built.

Ms. Rooney asked that maps include the contour lines, and not the include trees, to make them easier to read and understand where the hills are.

Mr. St. Germain will ask Becca Solomon, Ashland's Conservation Agent, for a new map. Mr. St. Germain put his trail recommendations on this map. Mr. St. Germain asks Mr. Forestal to put his trail recommendations as a trail trace on this map.

Mr. Forestal offered to show any ATFC member the differences between a straight and a looping trail.

b. North Trail

Mr. St. Germain outlined the North Trail based on Mr. Moulton's original design which was approved by Ashland's Conservation Committee. Mr. St. Germain used some suggestions from Ms. Rooney to move the trail to a gap in the stone wall. Mr. Forestal wants to move the trail closer to the wetlands to avoid a steep grade, and this will have to go to the Conservation Committee for approval.

Mr. St. Germain suggested the ATFC conduct an on-site walkthrough. Given the number of ATFC members this would be an official ATFC meeting. The meeting will be held May 25 5:00 PM at the Oak Street entrance. Mr. Forestal suggested we put cars at each of the Oak St and Oregon Rd lots to shuttle people around.

c. Water Tank bypass trail

Not Discussed.

d. North Trail connector to current trail near Wildcat Hill

Not Discussed.

e. White trail loc 20-23 steep section bypass

Not Discussed.

f. Quarry Loop trail Loc 10-14

Not Discussed.

g. Other

Not Discussed.

8. Pollinator garden

Not Discussed.

9. Shed ramp/driveway extension proposal

Not Discussed.

10. Dog walking bi-law enforcement & Doody Calls

Not Discussed.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and was seconded. Approved 5-0-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Future Meeting Dates: May 11, May 25 (5:00 PM at the Oak Street entrance), June 8, June 22

Appendix 1: Analysis of DCR grant funding for Tree Replacement Project

DCR 75%/25% grant	
Approved budget	<u>\$ 11,063.62</u>
DCR approved share	\$ 8,297.25
Ashland Labor and Cash share	\$ 2,766.37

Cash expended to date	\$ 9,018.00
Anticipated additional expense	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
Anticipated total cash expense	<u>\$ 10,018.00</u>

Of which DCR pays	<u>\$ 8,297.25</u>
Ashland cash share from CPC #4	\$ 1,720.75

25% Share calculation	\$ 2,766.37
Cash portion (xfr from CPC #4 funds)	<u>\$ 1,720.75</u>
Minimum Labor Portion	\$ 1,045.62

Labor Component Estimate

Saturday Planting Hours	Hours	Rate \$25
Mike	9	\$ 225.00
Rob	6	\$ 150.00
Helpers 10@3.5 hours	35	\$ 875.00
total 4/27/22 hours	50	<u>\$ 1,250.00</u>

Watering and misc follow up	Hours	Rate \$25
Mike	2.5	\$ 62.50
Rob	3.5	\$ 87.50
Brett	2.5	\$ 62.50
total	8.5	<u>\$ 212.50</u>

Planning	20	
Site Prep	20	
Exclosure installation	20	
Hole digging	20	
Procurement & Transport	20	
Ongoing Watering	20	
Total	120	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>

Total Labor to Report	178.5	\$ 4,462.50
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