



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Town Forest Committee Minutes

February 9, 2022, 7:00 PM

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

Members Absent: Cathy Rooney

Public Present: None

Call to Order

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

Sustainability Committee Presentation

Mrs. Hulme presented the Sustainability Committee's draft Net Zero by 2040 Plan and answered the ATFC's questions. The committee expressed verbal support but did not officially vote on the Sustainability Committee's plan because it is still a draft.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 26, 2022

The Ashland Town Forest Committee (ATFC) reviewed and amended the meeting minutes of January 26, 2022. A motion was made to approve the amended meeting minutes and seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

Accounting Report & Expense Submittals (if any)

Accounting Report

Mr. McGrattan said there were no recent changes to the restricted funds accounts.

In unrestricted funds, Mr. McGrattan said \$16.85 was allocated for nuts & bolts for the shed for Mr. Forestal's work. There are no funds currently allocated for public programs.

There are two (2) new grants from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR):

- DCR Forest Stewardship Plan Grant which sunsets June 15, 2022, for \$980.20
- DCR Stewardship Implementation Grant which sunsets June 15, 2022, for \$8,297.25

Mr. Jones asked why the Deer Enclosures project was now under the DCR Stewardship Implementation Grant. Mr. St. Germain proposed moving this project under the Stewardship Implementation Grant based on guidance from the DCR, because it allows the ATFC to maximize matching funds from the state, and to fully consume this grant before it sunsets on June 15, 2022. Originally the Deer Enclosures project was under the CPC Grant #4, which sunsets on June 30, 2023.

A motion was made to approve the Accounting Report and seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

Expense Submittals

Mr. St. Germain submitted an expense reimbursement form for \$2880.98 for a Deer Exclosure. This was approved 5-0-0. Mr. McGrattan will submit this expense to the Town of Ashland. Mr. St. Germain also shared that he had a positive experience working with Monnick Supply to obtain the Deer Exclosure materials.

Public Programs Calendar

Mr. St. Germain reviewed the list of public events.

Mrs. Hulme said the Fairy House walk is scheduled April 23 and the rain date is May 7.

Mr. Forestal said he will schedule a bike ride on a Monday in June.

Mr. Jones said he will schedule the barberry pull for earlier in April.

Planning 1 – 2022 Projects – Quick Review

Not discussed.

Planning 2 – Trail redesignations Discussion

Not discussed.

Old business: Comments and Questions on updates and ongoing projects

Resurfacing the Winter Street Large Lot with crushed stone

Mr. St. Germain reviewed the project with the ATFC, which is to add stone to the Winter Street large lot, to resolve the issue of mud and ruts. The proposed target date was early March before the thaw, however the project could wait until April, when the ground has thawed.

Mr. St. Germain met with Doug Small from the DPW, who recommended using 3/4 inch stone. The Town Engineer recommended larger stone, 1 inch or 1½ inch stone, but indicated 3/4 inch stone was acceptable.

Mrs. Hulme raised several concerns with the project including adding stone material on a frozen surface, adding material without removing the existing mud, and adding stone without compacting it. Based on previous professional experience, she is concerned about how long this solution will last. If the project moves forward, Mrs. Hulme recommended washed 3/4 inch stone, as the lot already has enough silt.

Several other ATFC members raised concerns about whether this solution would resolve the mud and rutting issues long term. Mr. St. Germain indicated this was not a perfect solution, the DPW and Town Engineer said it will improve the current mud and rut situation.

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Mr. St. Germain indicated there is a Boy Scout, Srihari Srivatsa interested in an Eagle Scout project, and he has discussed this project with him. The Scout will raise the funds for the stone and the DPW has agreed to move the material from McIntyre to the Winter St Lot. The Scout will get volunteers to spread the stone to an estimated 1 ½ to 2 inches thick. The Scout's project would not include rolling or compacting the material.

Mrs. Hulme and Mr. Jones both recommended that if the project did move forward, it happen in April after the thaw, and the lot be rolled after the material is spread out.

A motion was made to approve the resurfacing of the Winter Street Large Lot with crushed stone after the thaw and as long as the DPW can deliver the stone and roll the lot after the Scouts have spread the stone, and seconded. Approved 4-1-0, with Mr. Forestal dissenting. Mr. McGrattan had reservations about the project and Mrs. Hume wants to see a formal plan regarding the depth of material.

Mr. Forestal did the raise a question about how this project was presented to the ATFC, in that it seemed like the decision was made before the project was presented for approval. Mr. St. Germain said he thought the project itself was already approved by the ATFC, but how the project was actually executed needed to be resolved and then approved by the ATFC.

Tom Wessels Talk and Walk

The ATFC discussed how the Wessels fund raising email was put together and sent out. There was a concern that the ATFC wasn't in complete agreement with how the fund raising request was outlined in the email.

The ATFC is also not completely clear on the total cost of the Wessels project. The January 26 minutes reflected \$1,240, but the spreadsheet Ms. Rooney shared before the meeting indicated \$1,043. Mr. St. Germain said he would follow up with Ms. Rooney on the expected cost.

Mr. McGrattan reviewed the accounting report and said there no money allocated or approved by the ATFC for the Wessels project. Mr. St. Germain reviewed Ms. Rooney's fund raising list which indicated a donor commitment of \$1,300. Given the donor commitment, the ATFC will not contribute funds to this specific program.

Mr. McGrattan made a motion to create a separate account for Town Forest Public Programs to keep track and keep separate any fund raising and money spent on public programs. The motion was seconded. Approved 4-1-0 with Mr. Jones dissenting.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and was seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Future Meeting Dates: February 23, March 9, March 23