

Minutes
Hogback Preservation Commission
Marlboro, Vermont

The May 14, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:05 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office by Hal Himmelstein, Chair.

Members Present: Christine Colella, Bob Engel, Hal Himmelstein, Lauren MacArthur, Ed Metcalfe, Mike Purcell, Jim Tober.

Members Absent: None.

Others Attending: Bob Fisher (Wilmington Trails Committee and landowner adjacent to the Conservation Area).

The minutes of the March 12, 2012 Regular Meeting were approved as distributed.

Officer and Committee Reports

Chair's Report: \$3,000 has been taken from the Hogback Endowment Fund to reimburse Ed Metcalfe for back rent on a government tower lease determined to be on his property and not in the Conservation Area. An additional \$3,000 was taken from the Town's General Fund for the reimbursement.

Hal Himmelstein gave VLT Stewardship Forester Kerry Doyle a tour of the Conservation Area's north side on April 27 and indicated the Commission is interested in locating mast stands and deer yards as part of its biodiversity inventory.

Bob Engel and Hal Himmelstein attended a Windham Regional Commission networking workshop of Windham County town conservation commissions and other area conservation organizations on April 25. Quarterly meetings to share information are planned.

MES Day is scheduled for May 18. Hal has requested that, given current budget constraints, event leaders consider donating their services as do members of HPC and the HMCA Board of Directors. He indicated, however, that HPC would certainly honor HMCA's commitment to provide honoraria for this event should event leaders wish to receive the honoraria.

HMCA Report: HMCA board member Diana Todd made an outstanding presentation on the Conservation Area's Bishop Homestead on April 21 at the Vermont Archaeological Society's spring meeting in Bennington, Vermont. She will reprise the presentation at Marlboro Historical Society's annual meeting on July 19.

The re-route of White's Loop is cleared and blazed. Additional tread work will be done this month, including the laying of surepak on the entry section from Old Hogback Road to the fork where the actual loop begins—about 450 feet. Diana Todd will GPS the new section and revise the Conservation Area trail maps accordingly.

Conservation Commission: The Marlboro Conservation Commission continues its landscape analysis of trail crossings and connections between larger pieces of relatively wild forest. It has loosely identified a Route 9 crossing in the western portion of the Conservation Area, but needs to investigate the adjacent larger pieces of appropriate habitat. Work on this project is ongoing.

Planning Commission: The Marlboro Planning Commission continues its long-term effort to rationally approach the reworking of the Town's zoning laws. Of especial interest to HPC is the designation of conservation districts.

Southern Vermont Natural History Museum: The Museum has received two grants totaling \$15,000 that will help fund new exhibits.

Vermont Land Trust: No report.

Old Business

Wilmington Trail Connection. The Commission discussed linking the Conservation Area trail system with the Wilmington trail system, as well as permitting the Wilmington Trails Committee to include the Conservation Area trails on a Wilmington Trail System master map. The Commission voted unanimously to permit the inclusion of our trail system on Wilmington's map while at the same time requiring the designation of a "Preferred Through Trail" and so indicating it on the map. This trail will include the sections of the VAST trail that enter the Conservation Area from the north and west boundaries, the segment of the VAST trail from the junction of those two short trail segments to the Douglas Trail, the Douglas Trail to its intersection with White's Loop, the White's Loop trail segment that heads south to Old Hogback Road, the access trail to the north parking lot, and the Tower Trail south of Route 9 to the Mt. Olga fire tower. By designating such a through trail the Commission hopes to reduce traffic on the Conservation Area's other trails.

Interpretive signage. Ed Metcalfe showed the Commission a possible model for interpretive signage that the Museum would like to erect in the Conservation Area, and suggested a variety of topics that could be addressed by these signs. The Commission asked Ed to prepare a few prototypes for presentation at the July meeting.

Kiosks and trail signage. The Commission will work with HMCA on trail head kiosk and trail signage design. We hope to erect trail signage this summer, but we must first agree on design criteria and materials. Bob Engel expressed a desire that the materials to be used be of environmentally friendly (perhaps composite) material rather than pressure

treated. Christine Colella indicated that painted wood signage would likely not be very durable.

Disposition of Aging Structures. Ed Metcalfe and Mike Purcell have perused the aging structures in the Conservation Area. They proposed an “arrest the decay” model as the most feasible and cost effective for two of these—the Summit building and the First Aid building off Route 9. The dangerous bridge on the western slope should immediately be heavily signed to help keep foolish adventurers off. A date will be established for a volunteers day to get some of this work done. Some hazardous waste remaining in a few of these buildings will be properly disposed of, and loose materials will be collected in a dumpster and carted off. Christine agreed to see if she can get us a deal on a thirty yard dumpster for this work.

New Business

Special Use Permit form. A suggestion was made that the Special Use Permit form should include a section that will allow for a detailed description of the nature of the event being proposed. The form will be revised accordingly and submitted for further discussion at the July meeting.

Due to time constraints, a revision of the administration section of the current version of the Management Plan that would move certain material from the main body of the text into an appendix tentatively titled “Hogback Preservation Commission Rules of Procedure” was tabled for consideration at the July meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m .

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Engel
Secretary pro tempore