

Regular Meeting of the Hogback Management Plan Update Committee
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 19, 2024
Town Office, Marlboro, Vermont and via Zoom

Minutes

Abbreviations used:

HMCA = Hogback Mountain Conservation Association

HPC = Hogback Preservation Commission

LNT = Leave No Trace

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm.

Present:

- in person – Diana Todd
- via Zoom – committee members Mike Purcell, Pieter Van Loon, Eric Slayton (arrived at 7:50); HMCA Director & Treasurer Nancy Anderson

1. Preliminaries
 - a. choose a secretary to take minutes – Diana
 - b. choose a Zoom host - Pieter
 - c. start Zoom recording
2. Minutes of previous meeting (June 5, 2024) approved as submitted.
3. “Leave No Trace” seven principles reviewed for possible inclusion in kiosk postings.
 - a. Noted the standard LNT 7 principles referred to camping and campfires, both of which are not allowed at Hogback. They also say “Leave what you find” but the draft Plan allows foraging. Thus the LNT 7 principles can’t be used verbatim on our kiosks.
 - b. Various adaptations of the LNT principles were considered, including “Take only photos, leave only footprints.”
 - c. Our goal of not using the Management Plan to micromanage was reviewed. The intent is to list the minimum required information to be posted on the kiosks, not to dictate or wordsmith the details of possible postings.
 - d. Instead of requiring LNT principles on the kiosks, the Plan will require listing Restricted and Prohibited uses.
4. New draft sections and revised sections were reviewed. (A copy of the draft that was reviewed was posted on the Town website. New and revised sections were in red type.)
 - a. New section on Funding approved as drafted, with very minor editorial changes and typo corrections.
 - b. Permitted Uses: new clause about horseback riding approved as submitted.
 - c. Trail Management: New bullet items about multi-use trails accepted.
 - d. Trail Maintenance: New reference to VAST trail standards accepted.
 - e. New section on the history of the 2013-2022 ESH Plan and why it was not renewed was accepted as written, with a typo correction (“every five years” should be “every two years”).
 - f. New section on Diseases, Insects and Other Pests accepted as written.
 - g. Agricultural History: new requirement regarding preserving stone walls during forest management activities was approved.

- h. Ski Area History: New section identifying the major buildings and other infrastructure components of the former ski area, discussing their current conditions and likely eventual fate was approved. The First Aid Building should be demolished as soon as possible. Potential risks posed by other structures were discussed. The question of whether to spell out these potential risks in detail in the Plan was discussed. Again, the intent of the Plan to provide guidance on how to make decisions, rather than to micromanage, was reviewed. A new bullet item will be written recommending annual inspection of all buildings and infrastructure to identify unsafe situations needing urgent action.
 - i. The recommendation that the Benedict Cottage be demolished was accepted as drafted.
 - j. We agreed that the draft Management Plan is now essentially complete. The formatting is not yet consistent, but we agreed that we don't need to have that level of polish in order to present the draft to the public and seek input.
5. Ideas for seeking public review and comment on the draft plan were explored.
- a. There will be two public meetings – one indoors and one a walk in the woods. They will be widely promoted, not limited to Marlboro residents. The HMCA email list of 400+ fans will receive an email. Front Porch Forum, local newspapers, and possibly paper posters will be used.
 - b. The draft plan will be available to download and written/emailed comments will be accepted.
 - c. Indoor Meeting
 - i. The idea of a hybrid meeting (both in-person and Zoom) was rejected. Committee members' experiences over the years have shown that large hybrid meetings never seem able to get equally balanced participation from and interaction between both the in-person and the online participants.
 - ii. We decided to have an in-person meeting, preferably at the Town House.
 - iii. The meeting will not cover every detail of the draft Plan, but should include mention of any items we feel might be controversial.
 - iv. The general plan is to start with a PowerPoint presentation of the key points of the draft Plan by Diana, then have Lucy Gratwick (a neutral party uninvolved in the drafting) moderate the discussion.
 - 1. We won't intend to resolve the issues raised during the meeting. We are collecting public input and will discuss that input and possibly make changes based on that input at subsequent HMPUC meetings.
 - 2. We discussed ways to capture all the input, including hiring someone to take minutes, having someone video-record the session (such as Andy Reischman, who might be asked to volunteer his services, or Brattleboro Community Television, who would need to be paid), making an audio-only recording, or making use of Zoom's AI minute-taking capabilities. This problem needs more investigation.
 - v. Diana will create the PowerPoint presentation.
 - 1. The PowerPoint will be presented at a HMPUC meeting before it is presented at the public meeting, and modified based on that review. Lucy Gratwick, the HPC and HMCA will be invited to attend the preview.
 - vi. Lucy, Diana and Pieter need to be at the public meeting. A date will be picked based on their availability. Pieter will be out of town for a substantial part of August and again for part of September.

- d. Walk in the Woods
 - i. It might be reasonable to do the walk in the woods before the indoor meeting, so that people who attend both will have a better mental picture of the conservation area for the indoor discussion. But this sequence isn't mandatory.
 - ii. A weekend day should be chosen.
 - iii. Pieter will be a key speaker, discussing why active forest management has been chosen.
 - iv. Diana can discuss recreation, permitted/restricted uses and other aspects of the draft Plan.
 - v. Further discussion is needed on how to capture public input during the walk.
 - e. A table of public input topics/ideas/complaint should be created (from the indoor meeting, the walk in the woods, and any written or emailed comments) along with notes on eventual resolution of the comment.
6. Plans for the next meeting were discussed.
- a. The next meeting will be July 10, not July 3, due to the 4th of July holiday. That is three weeks from this meeting.
 - b. If Diana finishes the PowerPoint by July 3, and if Lucy Gratwick is available, the July 10 meeting will be the preview of the PowerPoint.
 - c. If the PowerPoint is not completed in time, the July 10 meeting will continue planning the public input meetings – possible dates, how to capture comments, etc. An outline of the planned PowerPoint will be presented.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.