

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission
5 p.m. Wednesday, July 8, 2026
In Person & via Zoom
Marlboro Town Office

Minutes

Abbreviations used:

FUA = Facility Use Agreement

HMCA = Hogback Mountain Conservation Association

HPC = Hogback Preservation Commission

MP = Management Plan

SB = Select Board

VLCT = Vermont League of Cities and Towns

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm.
2. The agenda was reviewed and no changes made.
3. Attendance: Present in person - HPC members Mike Purcell, Sarah Fisher, David Clift, and Diana Todd. Present via Zoom – HPC member Ed Metcalfe and HMCA Secretary Nancy Anderson.
4. Minutes of the previous regular meeting (May 7, 2026) and the May 30, 2026 Special Meeting were approved.
5. Officer and committee reports
 - a. Chair's report
 - i. Mike reported that he had contacted VAST and learned that they do have a landowner permission form that uses the "Permission granted until revoked" format, which can be used instead of the annual renewal. Mike will arrange to have VAST send that form for the next renewal.
 - b. HMCA report
 - i. Nancy reported that HMCA had hosted two events in the last two months, which attracted a good number of new participants.
 - ii. There was no bird banding this spring, but they hope the project will be picked up again in the fall.
 - iii. HMCA's next Board meeting will be July 27, not July 20 as previously planned.
 - c. Museum report
 - i. Diana reported that Jack Widness had submitted an email report listing recent and planned activities at the Pool Nature Center. None of them were held at Hogback.
6. Old business
 - a. Research into having the town establish a Capital Fund for major Hogback projects – Mike reported that he had talked with the Town Treasurer, who raised the question of how to define the allowed uses of a Capital Fund. Do they have to be specific or can they be general? For example, a fund set up to buy a replacement for a fire truck is very specific. Can a fund be more generally defined, as we are envisioning for Hogback projects? Ed will contact VLCT to see if they have any guidance. Sarah noted that we should develop a list of projects anticipated in the next couple of decades and try to

establish some priorities. Which should be done first? Mike reported that the \$1,000 from the National Grid lease that is set aside for trail maintenance is apparently not accounted for in a Capital Fund account, but is being tracked as a line item in the town budget. The annual funding approved in the annual budget for use by HPC does not seem to be being tracked at present.

- b. Facility Use Agreement (permit) procedures – Diana and Sarah reported on the June 25 discussion with Select Board regarding the insurance requirement in the FUA. The SB had indicated they felt that if a FUA was granted, the insurance requirement should be enforced. In the past, that requirement had been waived for many activities. See the SB minutes for a report on the June 25 discussion. At that SB meeting, Diana proposed that the Hogback permit process be revised so that there are two tracks. For low-risk activities, do not require a FUA, SB approval, or insurance. Allow permits to be granted by the HPC after HMCA and HPC review. For higher risk events, continue to use the existing review procedure, with the FUA, SB approval, and the insurance requirement. The SB approved this plan and asked that HPC and HMCA work on fleshing out the idea with a goal of presenting a proposal to the SB in the fall. A working group was formed with Diana and Ed from the HPC and Nancy and Bethany Beech from HMCA.
 - c. Management Plan update – HPC actions called for in the MP were reviewed.
 - i. Develop Forest Inventory and Forest Management Plan – County Forester Sam Schneski has reported (via email to Diana) that the data collection phase of the Forest Inventory has been completed, but that data analysis will need to wait until fall, because Sam expects to be called up to serve on a forest-fire-fighting unit out west this summer.
 - ii. Dismantle Benedict Cottage – Mike contacted a local demolition firm to ask for a rough estimate of the cost of demolishing Benedict Cottage, and was told that they couldn't give even a ballpark figure unless they had a report on whether any hazardous materials were present. The cost of doing those tests is about \$400-\$800. In considering how to pay for those tests, Mike looked into the status of the HPC funding that had been approved as part of the town budget. In 2025, \$500 had been approved for HPC use, but none of it was tapped, therefore it is no longer available. In 2026, only \$200 was approved. Thus there are not enough pre-approved funds available. HPC voted to ask the SB to approve \$800 for the testing.
7. New business
- a. Regular meeting day – It had become evident that the choice of the first Thursday of the month caused conflicts with typical vacation patterns around both the 4th of July and Labor Day. HPC voted to switch to the fourth Tuesday of every other month as the regular meeting day.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm. The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, Sept 22.