

**Draft Minutes of the  
Town Forest Steering Committee Meeting  
9/27/18**

**Attendance:** The following individuals attended the meeting which was held at the Hartford Town Hall at 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction on Thursday, September 27, 2018.

**Steering Committee Members:** Mary Hutchins, Tom Kahl, Anna Schaal, Tim Schaal, Chuck Wooster, Richard Wright and chair/facilitator Angie Emerson.

**Staff:** Planner Matt Osborn.

**Others:** None.

Chair Angie Emerson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**Draft Recreation Plan:** Angie Emerson asked if there are any general comments regarding the Draft Recreation Management Plan. The following were the comments:

- There is a lot of boiler plate in the Plan. This is not surprising since Hartford is one of ten towns included in the project and the intent of the project is to develop a process and template for other Towns to replicate.
- The Plan is long. We should consider reorganizing the sections, placing the meat of the Plan upfront with the boiler plat as appendices.
- There are several plans/inventories for the Town Forest (Forest Management Plan, Recreation Management Plan, Wildlife Habitat Assessment, Bird Habitat Assessment and an Amphibian Inventory. The Recreation Management Plan should have more interaction with those Plans.
- There is general agreement that the Town Forest is a forest not a park and that should be clear throughout the Plan.
- The Plan mentions the trails assessment as not being completed. It should be clear that the assessment has been completed and the next step is for the Town Forest Steering Committee to go through the assessment and develop a prioritized list of trail segments that need work.
- Some Steering Committee members objected to the term unsanctioned trails throughout the Plan. The Steering Committee agreed to remove the term from the Plan.

Anna Schaal asked why the Conservation Commission manages the Town Forest and not the Parks and Recreation Department. Matt Osborn responded that in the late 1990s, there was no entity managing the Town Forest. There were many problems related to dirt bikes causing extensive damage, target shooting, partying, and vandalism. There were no rules in the Town Forest at that time. As a result, the Conservation Commission took on maintenance responsibilities. It started with trails maintenance, updating the Forest Management Plan in 1998 and then work on developing a Recreation Management Plan in 2001/2002. The reason the Parks and Recreation Department didn't manage the Town Forest was they had their hands full managing the many parks facilities throughout Town. It was agreed that discussion of improved coordination between the Conservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department should be noted in the Plan.

Tim Schaal stated that it is important that the maps in the Plan reflect all of the trails. He asked if Conservation Commission member Dana Hazen can make the changes and provide the information to the SE Group for the Plan presentation to the Selectboard. Matt Osborn responded that he has made the request to Dana. Matt also noted that some of the maps in the Plan show trails going off-site. These should be corrected.

The Steering Committee proceeded to go through the Draft Plan page by page with suggested edits. Matt Osborn agreed to make the edits to the Draft Plan and distribute to the Steering Committee for their review. Once the edits are approved by the Steering Committee, the Revised Draft Plan will be sent to the SE Group. The Final Draft Plan will be distributed and presented at a Selectboard in late October or early November.

**Next Steps:** Matt Osborn noted that he will make changes to the Draft Plan based on tonight's meeting and will distribute the revised Draft to the Steering Committee next week. It was decided that a Steering Committee meeting was not needed.

**Community Meeting:** Matt Osborn reported that he is waiting to hear back from consultant Drew Pollack Bruce regarding his availability for the 11/7 Selectboard Meeting which will serve as the community meeting for presenting the Draft Recreation Management Plan.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.