

**Town of Dover Trails & Recreation Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**via Zoom**  
**Tuesday, June 8, 2021**

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Members present: Sarah Shippee, Paul Fisher, Brian Donovan, Mike Purcell, Steve Petrik, Alison Ferris, Patricia Sweeney

Also present: Shannon Wheeler, Eric Durocher, Andy McLean, Jim McDevitt, Tim Shannon, Jeremy Kirk, Mike Garber, Julia LaGrange

**A recording of this meeting can be found here:** <https://youtu.be/Jsgxwa9TOXw>

**Acting Chair Patricia Sweeney had audio issues. Motion by Sarah to approve Eric Durocher as temporary Chair seconded by Mike. All approve. Eric called meeting to order at 6:34 PM.**

**I. Public Comments:**

- a. Mike Garber: motorized vehicles on trails fell off agenda from last meeting. Can we see on next agenda? Has anyone seen anything on the trails as far as motorized vehicles? I know the trails DVSJ have fixed are being damaged by these vehicles.
  - i. Tim Shannon: are you seeing things in a specific area that we need to be aware of? I know last year there was activity behind airport and in Crosstown.
  - ii. Sarah: Have you heard that this is happening or you're just trying to get ahead of it?
  - iii. Mike Garber: Haven't been out this summer but looking for feedback. I have heard that the trails by Hathaway are deteriorating because of dirt bike and quad riding.
  - iv. Sarah: next agenda we need to talk about how to handle enforcement and what areas the town has the power to do that.
  - v. Mike Purcell: I think the areas he's talking about are north of Dover Hills and are National Forest Service land.
  - vi. Eric: we will add to next agenda to discuss the areas we're concerned about and where we have jurisdiction and where we don't.
  - vii. Sarah: Mike Garber can you please send your suggestions/ideas in writing to Shannon before the next meeting so we can ask more intelligent questions of you then.

**Eric relinquished control of meeting to Acting Chair Patricia Sweeney at 6:41 PM**

**II. Rules and Procedures of Trails Committee: *Eric***

- a. We need to set some solid ground rules. In addition to waiting to be acknowledged by the Chair of the meeting before speaking, people that are speaking about projects you're working on, please don't assume everyone in the meeting has that same knowledge. If you're one of those people don't be afraid to ask questions. I don't want anyone to feel they are being excluded from a conversation because they don't have as much information available to them.
- b. Each and every member on this committee is a volunteer member that has been appointed by the Dover Selectboard. That does not give you the authority to represent yourself as a representative or an employee of the Town of Dover. You can certainly share you're a member of the trails committee but there's no real authority attached to your title or involvement here.
- c. No one in this committee has the authority to contact a private landowner regarding the creation of trails. There should not be any new trails going onto Town owned property that are available for public use at this time. The new process is all new projects are placed in front of this committee for discussion and from there taken by Economic Development to the Selectboard for review and voting. Prior to the Recreation plan being complete individual groups did more of this but the idea behind this group is that we use this new process. This means we should not be out flagging new trails on Town property. This means Horace Hill, Dover Town Forest, the portions of the Valley

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Trail that are Town property. If you have a project, I love the enthusiasm, but we have to follow the process in place.

- d. Mike Purcell: I manage the Hogback Conservation area I'm the Chairman of the Board there and we have a process for trails/concepts and generally speaking they're identified with pin flags so people can review them to decide if that's how you want to accomplish the mission. At Hogback the purpose was to get to the Hogback summit. It's pin flagged until members of the Board can follow the route and evaluate. Until you see it there you can't just draw on a map and make that decision. It's certainly a process that gets reviewed and voted on before it's implemented.
- e. Eric: the concern with doing that in this manner especially with Horace Hill is that no decisions have been made on exactly what that property will or won't be used for. I'm not trying to hinder progress I just want to make sure these discussions are being had and no one feels like anyone is going rogue. Until it's gone through that approval process, no private landowner should be contacted about the use of their land for connecting to Dover trails. No one here has the authority to make promises to them, to ensure they would be insured or other things. The Selectboard would designate who they want to take that project on and then connect with those landowners. The reason I bring this up is that if we don't follow these rules we could end up triggering an Act 250 permit that covers the entire Town.
- f. Sarah: I understand the flagging – I think before that happens a conversation needs to be had here. And once we've said we want that then we pin flag.
- g. Mike: part of the reason that was done is opinions were made on conceptual and unreal. Until we identify the purposes of this mission of buying this property. Until you see it you shouldn't form an opinion on what's suitable.
- h. Tim Shannon: I just want to confirm as the President of SoVTA I acknowledge there are numerous people on the committee who are part of nonprofit organizations that work with trails. I want to confirm you are speaking about Town of Dover owned land and trails on town owned property and not private landowner projects these groups may be already working on.
- i. Eric: yes, my concern is things like Horace Hill, Dover Town Forest and any Town owned property trail.
- j. Mike Garber: just want to be sure that doesn't include maintenance on existing trails.
- k. Eric: no, I know we need to maintain our trails, I can't tell you how much I appreciate the work all of you do to make that happen. But what that can't grow into is while I'm here doing maintenance on this trail I'm just going to cut this other one while I'm at it. Any new trail work has to come before this group.
- l. Patricia: how about writing an outline of rules and procedures?
- m. Eric: If we need a general set of guidelines as to how this works, I'm happy to do that. If I put it in front of this group and we say no that doesn't work, then we can adjust. I've been informed by my Selectboard that they would like to see the decisions for trails coming through them.

**III. Approve minutes from April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting (No May meeting held):**

- a. Motion by Steve seconded by Alison - approved by all in attendance in April.

**IV. Dover Town Forest naming:**

- a. Andy: when we went to name Horace Hill there was an email survey that went around and not realizing the intent of it I forwarded it to a large Dover distribution list. That was a mistake on my part as it was supposed to be for committee members. A hugely popular choice was to name it in memoriam for Phil Bartlett. While not the right fit for Horace Hill so many people are looking to honor Phil's contributions to the town that we needed to consider it for the future and another

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property, perhaps the Town Forest where he was instrumental in the purchase. I think it would be incredibly appropriate. My suggestion is the Philip E Bartlett Memorial Recreation Area and I think the townspeople would be happy with that. Because with the help of SoVTA we've made it more of a recreation area than previously. I think it's appropriate to have a name that reflects that. It would help folks recognize what's going on up there.

- b. Motion by Sarah to recommend to the Selectboard that Dover Town Forest be renamed the Philip E. Bartlett Memorial Recreation Area. Seconded by Mike.
- c. Discussion ensued with trying to keep Dover attached to it, not losing the identity that has been built for Dover Town Forest, too lengthy of a name.
- d. Clarification that the property being discussed is not Horace Hill but the Dover Town Forest with the main access off Rice Hill where there is a small parking area and trails start. It is surrounded by National Forest and between Wardsboro and Dover it is around 5,000 acres.
- e. Sarah withdraws her motion and suggests committee members send suggestions to Shannon to compile them into a poll for selection at next meeting.
- f. Andy thanked everyone for considering this and being so thoughtful about it.

**V. Ridge Project update:** *Steve*

- a. Since last meeting per USFS request we have completed rough alignments for flagging. Having a meeting soon about pin flagging.
- b. Discussion about the different sections of this overall project and engaging the VYCC in reinforcing tread across the Ridge. Steve, Eric and Andy will have a call with USFS later this month and ask to put that on agenda.

**VI. Trail A- update:** *Eric*

- a. Have been in contact with our municipal project manager Fuss & O'Neill and our engineer Lamoureux and Dickinson. They're in the process of diving back into info and once engineer comes back with tentative plans they'll move forward with easements.

**VII. Report on Northampton Trails visit:** *Eric*

- a. [Photos can be found here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Ycyfanz9d7KsmY5s8> ]
- b. Visited Northampton State Hospital Disc Golf Course/Trail System yesterday – about 22 acres of property they have managed to incorporate mountain biking trails, machine groomed walking trails and a disc golf course on. Wanted to see how these 3 things can coexist with each other, last meeting we had some people not sure they could. If you have the chance go down there, it's less than an hour and worth the visit. It's enlightening to see how all these things fit together. The set up there is all of the disc golf course veers off the main trail so the only reason a disc golfer would be on the main trail is to complete a hole and move on to the next one.
- c. Discussion about other closer locations that could be visited (Marlboro Elementary, Living Memorial Park, Pine Hill in Rutland) and that some are more maintained than what we see here in these photos.
- d. Eric's point to visiting this specific location is that it has a big terrain change like we face at Horace Hill.
- e. Steve thanked Eric for taking the time to do due diligence and see what works and what doesn't..

**VIII. Horace Hill discussion:** *Eric*

- a. Looking to have a discussion about the things we heard from representatives at the last meeting who are interested in pursuing projects at Horace Hill. How do we feel about what was presented to us and those things coexisting at one place?

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- b. Steve: if we're going to make presentations and discuss what we all want I think we should have some time to prepare.
- c. Eric: I just want to make the point if we are going to come together and have a discussion with formal presentations; from an Economic Development standpoint and I'm sure a Selectboard standpoint; they'd like to see some cooperation between these groups as to how this could potentially work together. We've already done the here are 3 groups wanting 3 different things. Let's come up with an idea or a plan on how they could work together.
- d. Steve suggested a working group meeting where plans could then be brought back to the Trails committee and then to the Selectboard.
- e. Eric :agreed, let's get everybody together. All interested parties in the room, which include people not on this committee, all constructively having a conversation on how we can bring all these things together. We're not guns blazing right now, things need to be thought out more and planned so in the end we end up with something really amazing.
- f. Jeremy: I just want to encourage that the net is cast wide for a meeting like that so all interests and perspectives are represented. And I wanted to ask that we all come with a spirit of openness and collaboration. Horace Hill is certainly capable of serving lots of different folks in our valley.

**IX. Choose Chair for July 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting:**

- a. Sarah Shippee volunteered

**X. Motion to adjourn by Sarah at 7:46 PM, seconded by Mike.**

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler  
Economic Development, Town of Dover