

Stranahan Forest Stewardship Committee

Approved Minutes

March 22, 2022

Public Meeting on draft Management Plan

Time: 5:30-7:00pm

Date: March 22, 2022

Place: Zoom and in person at Old Schoolhouse Common

Zoom link and phone number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87399828750>

phone in number: 1 646 558 8656

Facilitator: Nancy Everhart

Members: Nancy Everhart, Brett Engstrom, Patrick Pfeifer, Michael Sabourin, Jenny Warshow

CC Rep: Ed Jalbert, Bradley

Public: James Arisman, Suz Stillinger, Rich Phillips, Mary McCarthy

Select Board Members: Rich Baker, Chris Martin

Introductions: All who were present gave a brief introduction of their role in the community and various town committees.

Nancy gave a brief overview of the draft plan. Nancy highlighted the following: A key topic has been balancing the different uses of the forest as well as keeping in mind the easement requirements. The committee decided to add to the draft plan a policy to not open the forest to commercial timber harvest. In addition the committee added a process for reviewing and adding proposed new trails, and signage for dog etiquette in the forest.

Patrick focused on the timeline of the rewrite, revising and reviewing the previous plan. In addition input from the land trust and a review of other town forest plans from around the state. The goal of this meeting is to listen to the public comments. This meeting is recorded.

Public Comment: Rich Baker sent an email with comments. He wanted to clarify his comments: Thompson Rd is a class 4 road. His suggestion is that it is reclassified as a trail. If it is reclassified as a trail, there is the possibility of applying for grants. He suggested adding a statement about

Ebikes in the plan, ADA accessibility, additional parking, consider adding a comment about interconnected trails with Groton Forest, trails at Twinfield.

Rich Phillips: Thinks it is a “great improvement and good piece of work.” He thinks adding the process for adding trails is important. Rich suggested considering building a public picnic shelter at the old house site on Thompson Rd. This would be beneficial for seniors to have a shelter location to enjoy this space. He echoed Rich Baker's suggestion creating a capital improvement list which includes a range of costs that can be funded by grants like funds from ARPA.

Chris Martin: Thompson Rd classification has been a longstanding issue in the forest. The parking area on the Hollister Hill side has generated complaints over the last few years. For example, using it for other purposes than using the lot for forest use. Chris understands where the timber harvesting piece in the plan is coming from. He would like the committee to be flexible about this in the future.

Rich Phillips: He understands that if the class 4 rd went to trail status, there would be more paperwork from the state to maintain as a trail because of wetlands and stream alterations.

A discussion about the Thompson Rd followed which included class 4 status, wetlands, VAST trail access.

Bradley made an observation about parking lot capacity and the increase of use since the pandemic.

Rich Phillips and Rich Baker suggested getting trail counters for gathering user numbers which can help to guide forest projects.

Patrick asked Rich Baker and Chris Martin from the Select Board if it would be helpful for the SFSC to create a capital project list over the next few years. Rich suggested that it can be useful for grant applications. Chris agreed with Rich.

Sue: Is there a mechanism for adjacent landowners to donate land to improve/add to the forest? Rich B. suggested giving an easement instead of donating land.

Rich Phillips: Hopes to have a Marshfield day in the forest that can include yet not limited to a history walk

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Discussion/Other business: Emerald Ash Borer has been positively id in Stranahan.

Agenda items for April 26th meeting:

Approve minutes from 2/2022 mtg

Review written comments on plan and highlights from 3/22/22 mtg.

Timeline for finalizing mgmt plan

Priority project list

Facilitator: Patrick