

Town of Concord
Estabrook Woods Access Study Committee

Thursday, November 3, 2016

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Sally Schnitzer
Polly Reeve
Neil Rasmussen
Peter Siebert
Bonnie Pohlig
Justin King
Lisa Pohl
Jeff Adams
Kathryn Angell (by phone)

Also present: Nick d'Arbeloff, Carlisle liaison, non-voting
Delia Kaye, Natural Resources Director
Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board Liaison

Public Present: Anna Winter
Ellie Bemis

1. Sally Schnitzer noted that Kathy Angell had requested and received approval to attend the meeting via phone because she was at a significant geographic distance.
2. Minutes for October 13, 2016 meeting were discussed and approved as written.
3. Minutes for the October 24, 2016 public hearing were discussed and approved as amended.
4. Several pieces of correspondence were received since the last meeting and had been previously distributed to committee members. These were discussed under item #6, as part of the discussion of the public hearing and feedback received.
5. Administrative matters: After receiving Neil Rasmussen's note about Pack Meet-Up's gathering at Estabrook Road, Peter Siebert contacted the Meet-Up group to clarify that Estabrook Woods is largely private land and that their behavior could

jeopardize access, especially for dogs. Neil reported that another group, of 21 people, had met at the Woods a few days later.

6. Reflections on the Public Hearing: Sally asked each member to comment on their takeaways from the public hearing and the feedback we received on that evening and subsequently. While each member had his or her own perspective, in general it was felt that the public was relatively receptive to the preliminary recommendations. There was little new information received from the public, with a few exceptions:
 - a. Parking may not be a useful tool for controlling access in the future, thanks to Uber and self-driving cars.
 - b. Proposed temporary parking on Estabrook Road is within 20 feet of a residential water supply well head.

Several members noted that the idea of improving parking and access at or near Punkatasset was generally well-received, and that there was concern over setting a precedent of restricting access on a public road. It was noted by several people that the director of the Harvard Field Station emphasized that the core of the Woods was preserved for research and education. Members of the public continue to have strong feelings on all sides of the issues the committee is trying to address.

Jane Hotchkiss complimented the committee on the hearing and felt that there was a general feeling that the committee had carefully worked to gather information and come up with a set of thoughtful recommendations.

7. We discussed the final steps needed to submit our recommendations to the Select Board by the beginning of December. Jane Hotchkiss confirmed that the final report can be the same document as our final set of recommendations. We do not need to produce a comprehensive report – the record of our meetings and the files of correspondence and documents, along with our presentations at the two public hearings, will serve as background if further information is required.

Sally Schnitzer proposed that we make minor improvements and edits to the preliminary recommendations document, take necessary votes, and submit this final document to the Select Board. We then focused on specific sections of the document:

8. **Punkatasset Parking Area.** Several members of the committee, plus Delia Kaye, proposed revisiting the size and clarifying the details of what we are proposing

for the parking area on the Apthorp Land. Comments from the public indicated an assumption that we were proposing a paved lot (which we did not intend) and that space for 20-24 cars was a very large lot. We will add language specifying that the lot be gravel or dirt or some other appropriate permeable and low-impact surface. We reviewed the size of other town conservation parking areas (Town Forest - 17 cars; White Pond – 3 cars; Mattison Field – 6). We also reviewed the recommendations in section 4.d.i and agreed that we would replace this with a recommendation that, if a parking area on the Apthorp Land is not possible, then the NRC and public safety team work with neighbors to consider other options for improving the parking for Punkatasset to ensure safe parking for at least 13 cars. This could include widening the shoulder and/or reducing the speed limit.

Committee members held a straw poll to determine the range of opinions on the number of cars to recommend accommodating in the potential Apthorp lot, and the results were: 14-18 (4, plus the non-voting Carlisle representative); 16-20 (1); 20-24 (4).

9. **Dogs.** We reviewed issues pertaining to dog behavior, rules, and enforcement. Private landowners are not required to adopt guidelines, but they can be urged to do so. The impact will be in the communal acceptance of the guidelines. Enforcement will probably be up to the Animal Control Officer. We discussed adding something similar to Kathy Angell's suggested measures for the future outlined in her memo to #9 in the Recommendations. It was also suggested that Recommendation #2 be amended to be more urgent.

10. **Other modifications to draft suggested:**

- Make sure that the difference is clear between the public Estabrook Road and the trail access there.
- Include language about respecting the need for quiet around private homes and ensuring that private homes are clearly understood to be private.
- Include more about Harvard's ownership and purpose.

11. Public Comments

- Ellie Bemis: Expressed her support for the measures that have been taken at Estabrook Road, and her concern that the problems there will just be transferred to the Punkatasset neighborhood. She is concerned about the high quantity of parking spaces that have been proposed in the committee's

preliminary recommendations. She encouraged the committee to be comfortable with imposing a limit on parking – we do not need to provide a parking space for everyone at all times. The dog issue is real, and when there are large numbers of dogs together they are never under control. Punkatasset is public, but it is part of the whole mosaic that composes Estabrook Woods.

- Jane Hotchkiss: The Select Board looks forward to receiving the committee's recommendations.

Documents consulted or reviewed at meeting:

- Memo from Kathy Angell dated 10-27-16
- Concord parking lot survey prepared by the Natural Resources Department