

BOYCE HILL STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JULY 27, 2022

Present via Zoom: Lisa Koitzsch, Corrie Miller, Chuck Martel, Sally Dwyer, Pete Colgan, Woody Dugan, and Amy Sheldon

1. Sally moved to approve the minutes from July 13, 2022. Woody seconded, no further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.
2. No public input.
3. Amy asked the SC to submit their top three goals for Boyce Hill. She synthesized the goals into a draft document and reviewed them with the Committee.
 - Peace, solitude, and views were the most common topics.
 - Amy suggested incorporating education into some of the goals or adding a separate educational goal. All agreed. Pete stated that an added goal would be to encourage on-going education regarding the cultural and natural history of the land.
 - The island concept was mentioned as a temporary constraint with a long-term goal of connectivity.
 - Woody and Pete noted that the open feeling, and not just the views, was important. Divergent discussion about the word 'pastoral' and a consensus was reached that the term "open" was acceptable.
 - Discussion regarding how to make decisions – consensus vs. voting. Amy noted the SC seemed dedicated to finding consensus and that this was a good starting point.
 - Discussion about peaceful/passive/low impact/**quiet** recreation.
4. High level strategies
 - Amy walked the SC through each strategy on the spreadsheet to determine if there was consensus. If there was not, there was some discussion and a note to come back to the strategy for more in-depth discussion.
 - Neighbors – SC consensus to respect surrounding landowners and their individual issues.
 - Pond – high use areas vs low use, some areas not mown and prioritized for biodiversity, remove non-native fish, dam integrity, ensure safe access.
 - Dogs – Consensus re: keeping all dogs leashed. Dog waste removal – all agreed waste must be removed by dog owners.
 - Horses – Not allowed in the short term, but under discussion for the long term. SC will require mitigation measures before furthering the conversation.
 - Hiking – Current trails open for walking but fall line trail will be re-routed per notes from meeting last week.
 - Biking – Allowed on the main trail to the top, no bike parks, further discussion needed re: E-bikes, other bike trail use.
 - Skiing – Consensus to allow skiing, lack of consensus on how much to leave open for skiing. More discussion needed.
 - Camping/Fires –Consensus that neither is allowed.
 - Hunting/Trapping – SC not in favor of hunting or trapping but VLT requires SC to submit solid justification as to why. Lisa will forward Amy Liza's hunting email.
 - Fishing – No stocking, no invasives, short-term – fish out invasives esp. bass, long-term – no fishing.

- Skating – More research needed with town insurance agent/town attorney but agreement that ‘no winter use’ or ‘skate at your own risk’ should be posted until we find answers re liability risk. Perhaps differentiate between SC decision and Town regulations.
 - Swimming – Swim at your own risk, no water testing, no lifeguard.
 - Watercraft/flotation – Space issue, aquatic invasives. Allowed but education needed.
 - Discussion on ecological management bookmarked for another meeting.
 - Commercial Use and Group Use – Review of policy, discussion of application and the need for a process. Who will administer permits? Parking is limitation. Not encouraged but need to be ready to respond. School groups? Subject will need more attention. Need to iron out details of abutting landowner on northwest corner.
 - Ongoing Stewardship – Steering Committee, Conservation Commission, new Committee? Need a stewardship plan.
 - Abenaki – Engagement with the property? Acknowledgement? Statement of gratitude and welcome in plan? Future conversations in pursuit of how Abenaki people can be involved. Need more information.
 - Education/Interpretation/Accessibility
 - Consensus on importance of cultural history but not how much things should be restored.
 - Education about natural communities, restoration, ecological processes.
 - Waterway Buffers – Consensus to place buffers around waterways – need to decide how much. 50’? 100’? 250’? Amy will prepare for a GIS exercise so that SC can view buffers on screen. Buffers around vernal pools will need to be adapted near road and pond dam.
 - Invasive Species Control/Rare plant protection
 - VLT report and NRI management considerations
 - Identify, monitor, manage with best practices.
5. Dock
Discussion re: Long request and decision to put a notice out to Fayston residents for best offer.
6. Sign at pond
People keep removing ‘swim at own risk’ sign and throwing it in the pond. Thanks to Woody for retrieving and replacing it
7. Next Meeting Date
August is a tough month to schedule a meeting and SC were not able to agree on a date. Lisa will send out a Doodle poll to help determine the date for the next meeting. Woody asked that short-term stewardship issue be on the next agenda, as well as response to Janet Saylor’s letter.
8. Homework: Find joy 😊
9. Other homework: Work on no hunting justifications (Woody and others willing to help him), research insurance liability re: summer and winter use for pond (Chuck and Lisa).