

Minutes of February 4, 2009-rescheduled from January 7, 2009
Acting Secretary – Michelle Baughman
Mansfield Parks Advisory Committee

Present: Julianna Barrette, Eric Kruger, Cindy Weiss, Tom Harrington, Sue Harrington, Michelle Baughman, Ethan Avery, Jenn Kaufman, Matt Hart.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m.

The minutes of the November 5th meeting were accepted with minor changes, and approved on a motion by C. Weiss and seconded by T. Harrington.

New Business:

1. We welcomed visitor Matt Hart, Town Manager, who had kind words to say about the time that PAC members contribute. He asked us to voice any concerns and offered to field any questions. The possibility of a future Nature Center was discussed. Moss Sanctuary was posed as one possibility for the location of this future Nature Center. A four acre parcel is put aside for this purpose in the Moss Sanctuary management plan.
2. Nominations for the Samuel G. Dodd Award for distinguished volunteer service in Mansfield natural area: Tom and Sue Harrington, and Betty Robinson were nominated. The general consensus was to award it to Betty Robinson for all her work in organizing trail maintenance parties and volunteering to lead hikes and activities for many different organizations on Mansfield Parks properties.
3. 2009 Meeting Dates: No changes to the schedule were made.
4. Annual Report: Jen has already completed and submitted this year's report and she will bring it to committee next fall.
5. CT Trails Day: Sue Harrington is leading an event on June 6. Jen asked if someone else would like to lead another event. No one volunteered.
6. PAC Comments on PCZ file # 1280-4 lot subdivision at Farrell and Hanks Hill Roads: We like the location of the conservation easement and we are very pleased that it abuts the Joshua Trust Property Wetton Woods near Dog Lane.

Continuing Business:

1. Management Plan Assignments as follows: Fifty Foot Cliff to Julianne Barrette; Mount Hope Park to Penny Potter; Merrow Meadow and Shelter Falls to Sue & Tom Harrington; Dunhamtown Forrest to Cindy Weiss, Ethan Avery, and Michelle Baughman ; School House Brook to Michelle Baughman. We will have members of PAC report on their properties in the spring.
2. Source to Sea: Sue Harrington's program has had a date change to May 3rd. Michelle Baughman is still leading a hike on the Willimantic River Greenway Mid River Trail on May 16th which will include meeting at the final destination of the hike (River Park) where parking is plenty, and then car spot to the trail head (Merrow Meadow) where parking is limited. At the conclusion of the hike, drivers will be transported back to their cars.
3. FOMP Upcoming Programs: Thursday, March 5th Jean Haskell and Madge Manfred are leading a Nature Reading Group at the MCC Teen Center. This

event also repeats on the following dates: Thursday, April 2nd and Thursday, May 7th. Saturday, May 3rd Sue Harrington is leading a nature walk along the Mt. Hope River where she will teach participants about the flora, fauna, and migratory birds of this environment. Saturday, May 16th Michelle Baughman is leading a hike on the Willimantic River Greenway Mid River Trail which will include walking through Merrow Meadow Park, Spring Manor Trail, the Village of Mansfield Depot, Lynch Landing, and River Park. Saturday, June 6th Sue Harrington is leading a wild flower walk in the Barrows Pond area of School House Brook Park. There is no charge for participating in any of these events.

4. PAC Projects: Jen will try to get Becky Lehman to attend the April PAC meeting to tell us about the Park Stewardship Program, the writing of a Stewardship Manual and training so citizens can learn how to become Stewards of our Mansfield park properties.

Staff Reports:

1. WHIP Project Update: Jeff Ward of the Connecticut Agricultural experiment Station has been studying Japanese barberry and other non-native invasive species at School House Brook Park and Mount Hope Park. His research has shown that removing Barberry reduces the black legged tick population (which is a carrier of Lyme disease) because a certain type of mouse that is a tick carrier is attracted to the berries. He has discovered that using a propane torch and herbicides to remove the Japanese barberry has been very effective in reducing the tick population, which will in turn have a positive effect on public health.
2. Recent Acquisitions: There are four recently acquired properties that include: The Dorwort Property on Wormwood Hill and Mulberry Roads, the Luce Property which abuts the Chapin Trial side of Coney Rock Preserve, The Lion's Club field (which used to be leased to the town), and the Moss Sanctuary (located across the street from the Community Center).
3. NAV Workdays: There were a total of 209 volunteer work hours this fall, comprised of 131 UConn student volunteer hours and 78 Alternative Incarceration volunteer hours.
4. Grant in Process: Jen has completed a grant for trail guides for River Park and she has applied for an extension on the grant for trail guides for Commonfields (which connects Bassets Bridge to the Joshua Trust Pond Lot property near Cemetery Road).
5. Grants Applied For: Jen has applied for a New England Parks Association Grant to fund a rain garden at River Park.

Other Committee Minutes:

1. Conservation Commission: We would like to do something at Lynch Landing (which is not a town owned property, it is owned by Tim Quinn). Perhaps we can get students of E.O at the Depot to take on a project of building and donating a bench.
2. Open Space Preservation Committee: The proposed apartment complex on Huntington Lodge Road entitled Pond Place should have sewers so that we do

not end up with another community septic situation like we had at White Oak Condominiums.

3. Planning and Zoning Commission: Eric Kruger asked if the PCZ can schedule their field trip meetings at a different time (not during the middle of the work day) so that more people might be able to attend.

Other:

1. Cindy Weiss brought to our attention that columnist Peter Marteck did a recent article in the Hartford Courant about the Last Green Valley potentially losing it's Federal Funding and urged citizens to write their congress men to please not allow that to happen.

Adjournment

1. This meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. by a motion from T. Harrington and seconded by E. Kruger.
2. Next meeting is March 4, 2009, at 7:30 pm in the Mansfield Community Center Conference Room.