



Town of Natick
Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee

Minutes

Zoom Meeting – Remote Participation

Monday February 9 2026 7:00 pm

Attendees: Doug Drenik, Ch; Sharon Sharpe, VC, Jim Franzen, Lisa Standley, Mary Hudson, Denise Robbi, David Little. Guests: Cindy Bates, Josh Ostroff (FONT).

1. Minutes of the January 5 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. Take-aways from Previous Meeting (TBD = to be done)

Doug

- Revise and circulate the draft 2026 Goals - done
- Draft an outreach message to Trail Stewards - done

Claire - TBD

- GPS the Timothy Coolidge new Blue Trail - TBD
- Complete installation of signs at Town Forest
- Research access to Pine Hill
- Research, communicate with HOA concerning Takewampbait Trail repairs
- Pursue Rec & Park approval for tree removal, Coolidge Hill
- Schedule work day Pickerel Pond, bridge follow-up

3. Town Updates – not provided due to Claire’s absence

- C. Bates said that Claire had told her that there was a Town Meeting budget request that could cover mowing along the Takewampbait Trail at Broad Hill. Lisa clarified that this was a comprehensive trails budget request, not specific to that trail. J. Ostroff suggested that the Committee write a letter of support to the Finance Committee.
- J. Ostroff noted that the Notice of Intent for the Pickerel Pond N-S bridge is under review by the Conservation Commission. Doug will follow up with Claire.

4. Trail Stewards – Mary Hudson, Doug Drenik

- Mary noted that there has been little activity due to the weather. Laura Fokker has put in considerable time removing trash, and there may be a new downed tree at Pickerel Pond – David will look at it. She also noted that the hanging tree at the West Street trailhead of Timothy Coolidge will require professional removal.

- Doug has drafted an email to Trail Stewards as a thank-you celebrating 2025 efforts, and keeping stewards engaged. He used the website Beefree to develop a compelling design. The consensus of the Committee was that the approach, format and content are great. It was suggested that the mailing should include a link to the Trail Steward app, and a reminder to start checking trails in the spring. He asked that any edits be sent to him. Doug will work with Bob to finalize.
- C. Bates suggested that the fall newsletter should ask Trail Stewards to remove leaves and debris from bridges, to protect long-term integrity of the wood.

5. 2026 Goals

- Doug reviewed the revised 2026 goals document that had been circulated to the Committee. David requested that completing the Morse Pond loop trail be added to the list of priority trails.
- The list of 2026 Goals was approved unanimously.

6. Town Forest Signage

- Doug had drafted a potential “rules” sign for the Oak Street Town Forest entrance, as part of the larger Trailhead Improvement Project. The goal of this sign is to reduce the amount of signage that has proliferated at that location. The sign would likely be mounted on the re-painted gate, and Claire had indicated that DPW may be able to produce the sign.
- Lisa noted that this sign, rather than being a universal sign for all trail heads, was specifically intended to reduce the number of “rules” signs at that trail head and make it more welcoming. The Committee’s intent had been that all signage at trailheads be placed in the kiosks. For consistency, the Oak Street sign should also be placed at the Bacon Street trailhead for the Town Forest.
- The group discussed wording. It was agreed to remove “please abide by these rules”. Claire had requested that “no overnight parking” and “no blocking the gate” be placed on a separate sign, and that “no hunting or trapping” should be added. Others suggested adding “no camping”. It was also suggested that “Welcome” and “Rules” be separate signs.
- It was discussed, and agreed, that there was a need to post rules in order that there be a basis for enforcement.
- Doug will revise the sign and re-circulate for comments. He will follow up with Claire and DPW. If DPW is unable to produce the signs with icons, he will explore commercial sign companies with Town contracts.

7. Other Business

- Doug continues to work with potential Eagle Scouts. He has a new interested scout, but has had no recent contact with the scout who was interested in the Timothy Coolidge Rt 27 trailhead.
- C. Bates asked if the Committee could explore ways to encourage cross-country skiers, walkers and snowshoers to respect separate tracks for each activity.

8. Take-Aways

- Doug

- Follow up with Claire re budget
 - Revise and re-circulate Town Forest entrance signage
 - Coordinate with Bob on Trail Steward mailing
 - All – send edits to Doug on Town Forest signage
 - Claire – (From January)
 - GPS the Timothy Coolidge new Blue Trail - TBD
 - Complete installation of signs at Town Forest
 - Research access to Pine Hill
 - Research, communicate with HOA concerning Takewampait Trail repairs
 - Pursue Rec & Park approval for tree removal, Coolidge Hill
 - Schedule work day Pickerel Pond, bridge follow-up
9. Next Meeting – Monday March 2, 7 PM

Adjourned at 8:00 PM