

Minutes for St. George Fort Point Ad Hoc Committee Meeting held on Thursday December 17, 2020

Attendance: Members: Ken Oelberger, Tim Polky, Jerry Hall, John Falla, Dale Pierson, Tom Gorrill, Others: Jonathan Coggeshall

Announcements: None

Modifications to Agenda: None

Approval of December 3, 2020 Minutes: The minutes of December 3 were approved as distributed (Motion by John, 2nd by Tim).

Old Business

1. Abutter Meeting Follow up- Jerry said he feels that the Paulsens raised legitimate issues. People wander all over their land and there is no demarcation. He said dogs running loose is not ok and that signs don't help. He commented that the neighbors' comments reminded him of a Select Board meeting on Drift Inn beach area where abutters had similar concerns. He feels something can and should be done about some issues. Jerry said he cannot support proceeding ahead with trail plans with the feedback we received. Ken commented that the property lines could be signed like Clark Island and that signs could be installed that state the parking lot is closed after certain hours. Jerry said the concerns can be categorized: Trespassing, Parking Lot Use, Parking Lot Intrusion, Intrusion on abutters land, Dogs. Tim said there is no Town leash law but there is a State leash law.

Jerry said we should shelve the plan on UA at least for now until we address some of these issues. He posed the question of how to deal with trail maintenance if we do not do the UA project. John commented that the charge of the committee was to deal with a UA trail. He said this committee needs to recommend to the Select Board that until issues raised by the abutters are addressed, the project be put on the back burner. He said the committee should ask the Select Board to address management and use of the trail. The Select Board need to come up with a set of standards for management and use. He pointed out there used to be a gate at Marshall Point which could be an option for the access to the parking lot at Fort Point. He said things are done on other trails to preserve neighbor's rights. He said we should set the project aside and the Town should focus on maintenance and management and rebuild the trust of the abutters. Setting aside a certain amount of money each year for the trail's maintenance is an action that he thinks the Select Board should consider as well as doing a boundary survey. Jerry said the Select Board should lean heavily on the Conservation Commission (CC) to recommend what should be done.

Dale observed that he was not aware that parking had been an issue and has not seen it, but he doesn't live there. He does not think the parking issue is due to trail use but rather the spring, and illicit use, so it should be up to the Select Board to address. He thinks the only project related neighborhood issue would be increased use. He said we may never get to where the neighborhood would be happy with the project. Jerry commented we don't know what is going on in other trail parking lots. He sees

discarded things at Kinney Woods. Dale suggested it would be easy to get a gate for the Fort Point lot and perhaps someone from the neighborhood could tend the gate. Ken said that would restrict access to the spring, which could be a concern.

John said a boundary survey should be done to determine abutter's rights and we will need the DOT license. Ken suggested the survey should be done sooner rather than later. John commented that pledges received for the project to date were based on a UA trail and we will need to go back to the people who pledged at the appropriate time and update them after the Select Board is updated. Ken suggested the survey should be a recommendation of this committee to the Select Board. Tim commented we need an estimate for the survey and then the Select Board can try to find the funds.

Ken said the increased usage and driveway blocking concerns expressed by the neighbors were relevant to the UA project. Jerry feels more directional signage should be done. He wondered what deal was struck between the Maine DOT and the Paulsens when Route 131 was rebuilt. Tim said a survey can be justified irrespective of the trail. Abutters may not be in agreement with the line, but a survey would clarify it. **Tom agreed to ask Gartley and Dorsky for an estimate to complete a perimeter boundary survey of the Town property.**

Ken asked how we address the trail needs with minimal improvements to keep it useable--perhaps just do the bridge first and apply for a smaller RTP grant for that purpose. Dale questioned whether that is within the Ad Hoc committee charge since it would not be a UA trail. John cautioned any improvements could result in the neighbors' perception that we are ignoring their comments and feels this committee needs to be set aside until issues raised by the abutters are addressed. He said the Town may need to review all public properties and Jerry agreed. Dale said that we did not hear any positive comments at the meeting and Tom agreed but pointed out that only abutters were present at the meeting. Ken said he had a positive call from an abutter in favor of the project. Jerry confirmed that the Select Board's charge for the Ad-hoc committee is clearly stated to explore a UA trail. Jerry recommended that we categorize the key points made by the abutters to the Select Board: trespassing, parking lot use, parking lot intrusion, dogs, trash. **John said we should state broad goals to address the key points and he volunteered to put together a draft document to be given by the committee to the Select Board for the Ad Hoc committee to review.**

Dale suggested abutters should call the sheriff if there is illegal activity. Tim said the sheriff has to have probable cause to question someone. He pointed out that the sheriff is willing to enforce state law but cannot enforce local ordinances. John suggested we may be able to do more clearing to make the parking lot more visible if Maine DOT agrees town has right. Perhaps a light could be installed in the lot.

Ken said the next Select Board meeting is January 4th. Tom suggested that it may be helpful to have a member of the neighborhood involved in any discussions to address neighborhood concerns. Jerry said the Select Board may decide the ad-hoc committee

is no longer needed and ask the CC to make recommendations for trail maintenance projects. Tim agreed that trail maintenance is typically a CC function anyway so the ad hoc committee may not be needed. John said whoever deals with the neighborhood issues should be sure notice goes to abutters to keep them involved.

2. Survey & Design- Tom agreed to update Gartley and Dorsky that the Town will not be doing a UA trail at this time, but will request a proposal for a survey of the perimeter of the property.

3. DOT parking- The committee decided to have Larry proceed with developing a conceptual parking lot since it may be useful in addressing existing parking issues.

4. State ROW License- The committee suggested that Tim wait before responding to the Maine DOT on the license agreement until the survey is done.

5. Fund Raising- Ken suggested we go back to people who made pledges to let them know where things stand. **John agreed to do this after the Committee reports to the Selectmen.** Jerry suggested the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Georges River Land Trust may still be willing to help.

New Business.

1. Public Meeting(s) & Communication- The committee agreed a public meeting is premature. Select Board meeting will be on January 4th. The Ad-Hoc Committee members should reserve January 7th for the next meeting if needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM