

Friends of the Milford Upper Charles Trail  
Minutes of the General Membership Meeting  
February 6, 2007

**Call to Order**

Tony Niro called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. 15 members and 5 visitors were present.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the 1/9/2007 meeting.

**Guest Speakers**

- Animal Control Officers: Rochelle Thomson and Keith Haynes
  - Issues on the trail with dogs:
    - The Animal Control officers related stories about incidents with dogs on the trail. Dogs have gotten into fights with other dogs and bitten people. Some dog owners are swearing at and making physical threats against the Animal Control officers and other members of the public. The police have been called to the trail called to assist with animal control incidents. People are not using leashes as mandated by law. One of five dogs stopped on the trail do have a license.
    - Dog walking is concentrated on the trail because there is nowhere else in Milford to walk a dog and some local streets may not be safe due to traffic concerns.
    - Utilization of the trail for dog walking will increase as the weather gets better with spring.
    - As the trail expands, there will be more traffic with people coming from other towns; some of these may have more liberal animal control laws than Milford.
  - Regulations:
    - There are general town bylaws and trail bylaws specifically written for the trail.
    - The town bylaws specifically written for the trail allow dogs but do not address leashes. The general town bylaws, which also apply to the trail, mandate a ten-foot leash.
    - There is a fine and penalty for not using a leash. The first occurrence is \$15 and the second occurrence is \$25.
    - There is a \$25 fine for not having a license for a dog.
    - The town bylaws state that dogs are not allowed on town parks, cemeteries, or playing fields.
    - The trail is not a park, cemetery, or playing field.
    - Louisa Lake is a town park where dogs are not allowed, but it's proximity to trail has people taking their dogs on its grounds.
    - The Animal Control officers say an electronic leash is not a leash under the town bylaws. They also say that a dog owner cannot effectively restrain a dog in a fight with another dog with only an electronic leash.
    - None of the bylaws address people cleaning up after their dogs (no pooper-scooper rules).
  - Other information:
    - There are 1400 licensed dogs in Milford but probably double or triple that number.
    - There is only 1 full-time and 1 part-time (12-hours per week) Animal Control officer.
    - Animal control officers work only 9 AM to 4 PM. There is no coverage for other hours.
    - The Animal Control Dept is funded only by Selectman Office; not by fines or licenses.
  - Potential solutions:
    - The question was asked what other trails do regarding this problem. One person said that one trail with dog control issues had volunteers patrol and report people in violation. The Animal Control officers cautioned against volunteers approaching people because they may react in an offensive or even violent manner. They suggested that if a volunteer saw a repeat offender that they inform the Animal Control officers.
    - It was suggested that violators could be reported in the Milford paper
    - Reno recommended changing the town-wide leash law, and adding a pooper-scooper law. The Town Trail Committee will come up with some wording in consultation with Animal Control officers and selectmen. The Friends can support the recommendations, or suggest some changes.
    - Mike Bresciani of the Parks Dept recommended an educational approach.

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- It was suggested that the trail have better signage about leash laws and cleaning up after their dogs.
- It was also suggested sending a message on the town tax bills or through schools.
- Reno said that it would help if all complaints are logged and tallied. This information could be used to get support and to measure effectiveness of educational efforts.
- Another suggestion is to pilot a dispensing station for pooper-scoopers bags with accompanying trash receptacles. Hopkinton State Park reported a good experience with it. The Parks Dept is ok with trying it.
- Parks Department representatives: Mike Bresciani and Joe Arcudi
  - Mike and Joe said that the primary way that the Friends can help now is to pick up trash on the trail.
  - The Friends can also help by alerting the Parks Dept if they see anything that needs repair or attention.
  - The Parks Dept will determine how else the Friends can help after they assume responsibility for the trail from Mass Highway.
  - The Friends have a wish list on the trail website of things that could be done to improve trail.
  - The public should come first to the Friends with project ideas for improving the trail. The Friends can filter the ideas, make recommendations to improve them, and coordinate activities with the Parks Dept.
  - The Friends should get approval from the Parks Dept before sponsoring or directly making any changes to the trail.

### Officer Reports

- Secretary – Tom Myatt:
  - The membership count is 77: 40 Bronze, 17 Silver, 12 Gold, 7 Pathfinder, and 1 Trailblazer.
- Treasurer – Dave Cassinelli

#### Treasurer Report for 2006/2007

##### Income

Previous year carry forward	\$	1,889.96
Membership dues	\$	2,520.00
Contributions	\$	2,650.64
Advertisement	\$	0.00
Interest	\$	2.95
Pay Pal deposits	\$	115.00
Fundraising	\$	670.00

Total Income \$ 7,848.55

##### Expenses

Stamps	\$	16.99
Pay Pal fees	\$	5.32
U.S. Treasury	\$	150.00
Ridgewood printing	\$	762.00

Total Expenses \$ 934.31

Remainder \$ 6,914.24

- Dave recommended putting the Friends funds into an account that pays a higher rate of interest than our current account.
- Dave reported that according to the IRS, our income is low enough that we do not have to file a tax return for 2006.
- It was reminded that we have not yet paid for the granite bench engraving (almost \$300)

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- It was suggested that we inform potential contributors that their employers may offer to do matching contributions.
- Vice President – Tony Niro
  - Chris Chamberlain has not returned calls to Tony about his Eagle Scout project. Deb Walther had stated previously that her employer is willing to fund the kiosk project materials.
- President – Pat Rosenthal
  - No report yet (just elected at this meeting).

### Committee Reports

- Trail Committee Report – Reno DeLuzio
  - Phase 1 finishing work has stopped due to cold weather.
  - The contractor's contract ends 5/1. 6/16 still looks good as a grand opening event date.
  - The Phase 2 design is 25% done and submitted for approval to a battery of agencies.
  - Phase 2 is all set financially.
  - National Grid remains the major issue (99-year license by National Grid versus lease by federal officials). National Grid and local authorities are trying to get the Feds to change the regulation before Mass Highway goes out to bid. There is a teleconference tomorrow with all interested parties.
  - Reno would like for Mass Highway to get to construction by spring 2008.
  - A question was asked about who has jurisdiction over the whole Upper Charles Trail. Reno explained that each community will have jurisdiction over their own section of the trail.
- Special Events Committee – Pat Rosenthal
  - Pat asked the group for some thoughts. She wondered if enthusiasm has dwindled after a couple of false starts. Also people have been using the trail for months. She suggested that a formal ribbon cutting ceremony might suffice. Teresa suggested having a dedication of the trail to Reno. Reno did not agree, stating that others are just as worthy. Reno said he was still strongly in favor of grand opening event as merited by the political and financial support provided for the trail. It was decided to have a Grand Opening celebration.
  - Reno will be responsible for getting selected dignitaries to attend on the selected date and will help with formal invitation to the selected dignitaries.
  - Anyone interested in Grand Opening (GO) celebration should attend a meeting at 7:00 PM next Tuesday (7/13) at the Senior Center.
- Fund Raising Committee – chair vacant
  - Pat appointed Barbara Bradbury and Tony Niro as co-chairpersons of the Fund Raising Committee.
  - There was a suggestion that we could solicit veterinarians in the Milford area to donate funds for pooper scooper stations.
  - There was a suggestion to add corporate matching funds verbiage to the website page regarding donations.
- Safety Committee – chair vacant
- Publicity Committee – Nancy Wojick
  - Tony and Nancy made a lot of progress on improving the trail brochure, adding some history, a membership form, mileage and other information. They will meet with Bob Buckley tomorrow night about updating the trail map.
  - Nancy is following up with the Harmon Foundation about a photo opportunity in the spring as a public acknowledgement of their donation.

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- Maintenance Committee – Jennene Pasquarosa: absent
- Environmental Education Committee – Linda Konvalinka
  - Linda suggested sponsoring a Saturday night Owl hike on February 25<sup>th</sup> to observe owl breeding areas along the Trail. It was suggested advertising it by putting it on the trail website, on the Hopkinton website, in the Milford newspaper notes, and the local cable TV and radio station.

### **Old Business**

No old business.

### **New Business**

- Election of Friends president.
  - Margaret Myatt resigned as president of the Friends before this meeting due to career demands on her time. She could not attend this meeting due to a work conflict.
  - Per the Friends bylaws, an election is to be held to replace her as president for the remainder of her term (which ends in September 2007).
  - Tony Niro and Pat Rosenthal were each nominated for president. Tony declined the nomination. Pat Rosenthal was unanimously elected president.
- A motion was made and unanimously carried to create an Animal Control Committee with the charter to educate the public about controlling and cleaning up after their dogs. Pat appointed Nancy Mullins as the chairperson of the committee.
- A motion was passed and unanimously carried to approve Dave Cassinelli moving the Friends funds to a checking account paying a higher rate of interest.

### **Next Meeting**

Motion was made and unanimously carried to have the next meeting at 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 6th at the Senior Center.

### **Adjournment**

Motion was made and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM.