

HAMPTON FALLS DEPOT ROAD SUB-COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL – MONDAY, 10/17/22 - 5:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **PRESENT:** Larry Smith, Luke Prohaske, Paul Melanson, Lyn Stan, Steve Sabatini, Alex Dittami, Karen Anderson
2. **TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION**

Living Shoreline Grant –

Lyn Stan explained that this meeting was called in order for the committee to share their thoughts with Paul in regard to a Living Shoreline Grant that the Conservation Commission is looking into. He wanted to hear from the members what they saw as the future of the Depot.

L. Smith said that his understanding was that the committee's vision was that the area stays the same as it is today with the understanding that the trail will go through there in approximately 10 years. The addition of the rail trail will involve building bridges that will impact the marsh in a variety of ways.

P. Melanson said that a key aspect of a living shoreline is that natural materials be used. L. Smith said that when the engineering begins for the trail, that will be important to stress. He noted that the predicted sea rise will result in a 3' rise in sea level by 2050 and when the full moon and King Tides happen there will be an additional 2' of storm surge. Access will be limited because it will be under water.

S. Sabatini said that the area will be looking at dealing with more traffic in the future.

P. Melanson said that the launch activity deteriorates the gravel launch area and the wake caused by the boating in the river is deteriorating the banks. He noted that he has seen people walking on the marsh which causes damage. The area is an asset for Hampton Falls for the fishing, boating and wildlife.

A. Dittami, during the course of the meeting stated the following. As to the question of future plans for the property:

1. The DRC had determined that the area's use should be preserved in its natural state for the use of HF residents for swimming, fishing & boating etc., and that the rails to Trails project should be pursued.
2. That the DRC had made recommendations about signage and use restrictions which the Selectboard had already adopted. This included resident parking and limiting the size of boats that could use the launch area.
3. That as to the future, the DRC would watch to see how the new signage and regulations as well the post COVID era would affect the areas use and if appropriate make additional recommendations. There were no other future plans other than the Rails to Trails, and the question of a dock had already been determined by the voters.
4. That the Rails to Trails project was a good idea. That it is progressing faster than the 10 yr. representation, that engineering studies have already been initiated for the project and that if the Town does not act quickly and decisively, it will have a project that could be detrimental to the Town's conservation and use objectives.

Further, as to questions about erosion:

1. That over a third of the Town property at the Landing has been lost to erosion. A considerable amount of that being attributable to the effects of scouring caused by the bridge abutments and the use abuses at the launch site.
2. That the environmental concerns at the landing are part of a larger question that affects other Town property in the area.
3. That there are many studies available and several proposed remedies such as filling in the agricultural and mosquito control ditches, removing the bridge abutments and restoring the shore line.
4. Many of these studies are part of the DRC records. Alex agreed to send copies to Paul M.

P. Melanson said the boat launch must remain public. A. Dittami agreed that anyone can use it, the town can limit the size of the boat launched, which has been done and limit the parking options for non-residents. Would like to see the area kept as it is with no additional uses other than the rail trail when that happens.

L. Smith stated that the erosion from the boats needs to be minimized. We need to value what we have and share it. He suggested a hard surface be put on the boat ramp to secure the future of it. P. Melanson said the concrete would eliminate the rutting that is caused by the larger boats. L. Smith suggested that there may be grants available for that. P. Melanson said that if the town accepts money from Fish & Game, they are obligated to follow their rules. A. Dittami said that state grant money requires 100% access to all and his concern would be if additional facilities would then be required. L. Smith said a grant would help the town protect the asset of the boat ramp, which is a historical use of the area. P. Melanson said if you put a nice boat ramp there you will have more activity.

S. Sabatini said that a timely actionable step, would be to control (observed) vehicular traffic below the high tide mark, in the area supplementing signage, with bollards or jersey barriers to prevent vehicles from getting into the marsh. Jersey barriers along both sides of the ramp would also be effective to direct access to the water. L. Smith said that the committee did study restricting access to just the boat ramp and decided to try signage first, with enforcement. K. Anderson will work on the signage, resident stickers have been obtained and were distributed to the committee members.

L. Stan thanked everyone for their input.

Meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Minutes taken by K. Anderson