**Minutes**

**Town of Fryeburg**

**Parks, Open Space & Beautification (POB) Committee Meeting – Virtual**

**Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 8:30 AM**

In attendance: Tess Dana, Jennifer Layne-Eastman, Jake Scheffer, Nora Schwarz, and Charlie Buterbaugh

A few edits were made to the May meeting minutes, followed by a motion to approve the minutes by Nora, seconded by Tess, and approved unanimously. It was then agreed the committee’s June monthly meeting will be held Wednesday, July 14 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

New committee member Jake Scheffer was welcomed to the group.

There was some discussion regarding the approval of Jockey Cap Warrant Articles #40 and #41 by overwhelming support from town residents who attended Town Meeting in June. It was suggested that we invite Abby King of USVLT to provide our committee with an update, in about six months, on progress of the Jockey Cap project fundraising and overall progress.

Nora gave an update on the Weston’s Beach Recreation Management Plan and USM Research Assistant Caroline Paras. Paras was planning to meet with Saco River Corridor Commission Executive Director Dalyn Houser. The committee anticipates Caroline will complete the survey plan mid-July, at which point we can begin to coordinate our schedules volunteering to conduct the survey at the beach/parking lot.

The project to study feasibility of expanding the Mountain Division Trail multi-use path to the south (so it is continuous to Standish, ME), a project sponsored by State Senator Rick Bennett, was discussed briefly with mention that over 200 submissions of testimony were received. The committee agrees this project would improve outdoor recreation opportunities in the region, giving Fryeburg valuable visibility since we are at the northern terminus of the trail.

Tess gave an update on the town parks photography project. She worked with recent Fryeburg Academy graduate Julian Zhu, taking photos of each park over the course of two days. These will be used to build content for the town website, promoting Fryeburg parks. All photos were edited by Julian. Tess was planning to send a link to the images to Katie Haley and committee members.

Tess then shared knowledge and insights that she gained during the recent 2-day Partners Outdoors 2021 Conference. One of the major topics included the significant increase of outdoor recreation generated by the pandemic. Trends show this increase in outdoor recreation tourism in our region will continue even as our society emerges from COVID-19 limitations. Tess described several sources of state and federal funding that she learned about at the conference, including the Great American Outdoors Act, 30 by 30 Conservation Plan, John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, and others. Lots of funding is going towards outdoor recreation and open space conservation.

The committee then discussed the RERC initiative, with Nora and Charlie offering thoughts on the Planning Assistance Engagement Process that took place between fall 2020 and spring 2021, and which continues in earnest through the work of this and other town committees. Charlie mentioned that he led a project team through the planning phase of creating a brand identity for Fryeburg focusing on outdoor recreation. There are a series of slides created that Charlie said he would share with the committee. We discussed some of the considerations regarding the promotion of recreation opportunities in Fryeburg while maintaining a level of tourism that does not negatively impact natural resources. A gathering of members of each town committee will be held June 23rd and Charlie will attend to offer a summary of what POB has been working on. Other POB members had conflicts on 6/23.

Finally, Nora proposed the idea of designating committee advisors, which would allow people to offer expertise even if they don’t have the time to commit to being a full member of a committee. For example, Laura Deschambeault, who recently needed to leave the POB due to the demands of running her horticulture business, has great expertise in flowers/ornamentals and should be consulted as we plan beautification projects.

A motion was made to adjourn by Nora and seconded by Tess.