

Trails & Open Space Committee • Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

November 2, 2022 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Board Room & Zoom

Committee Members

Karen Aaron Scott Bauhs VJ Bonnard	Richard Bothwell Gayle Dana Lorna Dobrovolny	Livia Quan Ellen Raynor Graham Reid	Peter Sawyer Charlene Simmons Julie Thornton
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Staff Lead & Liaisons

John Groom (Staff) Leslie Loveland (Staff)	Benjamin Levine (Board)	
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Subcommittee Members and Guests

Nan Meek (Emeritus & Equestrian)	Carol Lindsay (Perspective Committee Member) Amy Porter (Member)
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I. Opening Business

- Call to Order/Quorum Call: It was determined that we had a quorum.
- Member Comments: There were no member comments.
- Approval of the previous meeting minutes (September 7, September 28, and October 6). Minutes were approved by the committee.

II. Discussion: TOS Leadership and Committee Membership

- The three current committee members that are reapplying to the committee are Julie Thornton, Karen Aaron, and Richard Bothwell. Carol Lindsay and Amy Porter have both completed their application and are eligible to serve on the committee.

III. Task List

The edited task list was presented to the Committee and approved by consensus.

IV. Review and Editing of the “Victories” list

This item was tabled until the December Meeting.

V. Winter trail access and TOS Committee Engagement.

Peter Sawyer stated that he will work with John Groom and put together a list of trails that we can individually travel so that there's information about those trails and who is traveling on the trails. It will be important that we document where we have been and the condition of the trails so that John has information going into next winter to propose maintenance of an informal winter trail system. Trails that might be good to document include the Nature Loop, the Glacier Way Trail, the East Perimeter Trail from the Hansel mailboxes to the Campground, and a trail between Swiss Lane and the Trout Creek Recreation Center. Members of the Committee (and the Association) can fairly easily track these trails in snowshoes and keep them open for all Association Members to use. Olivia Quan asked how hard it is to get a snowmobile on these trails and John Groom stated that he would like to keep staff work time to a minimum until we know that these trails are established. These trails would all be outside of the Cross Country Ski Area boundary and would give members of the Association another recreational opportunity that would not require a fee. The idea is not to crowdsource trails but rather have Committee members track the trails where they should be so that John Groom has that information. John Groom reminded us that we will want to be mindful of water sources and wildlife and how we are engaging with the public. We don't want to steer users to the wrong places. We can see how this works over the wintertime and then we can flush this out later. It is part of the Master Plan. This would be more for people who know where the trails are. We don't want people snowshoeing all over but rather on the established trails. John Groom also stated that if we are encouraging people to use these trails we want to make sure they are safe.

There was a longer discussion about how the tracking of the trails on snowshoes could be accomplished and how to track trails properly. Benjamin Levine, in response to a question by Scott Bauhs said that he could show us how he cuts steps at trailheads where there have been large berms laid down by the Town of Truckee snow plows.

VI. Discussion of How to Coordinate with the Covenants Committee. (3:55)

Peter Sawyer stated that TOS will need to coordinate with the Covenants Committee regarding both dog and equestrian policies within Tahoe Donner.

There was a discussion of the importance of making sure that the Trails Master Plan is in sync with the regulations of Nevada County, the Town of Truckee, the Forest Service, and any other jurisdictions that have regulations regarding dogs.

Once these issues are determined, it will be important that we meet with the Covenants Committee as to how we want to educate the trail users as to the expectations of dogs and dog owners on the trails.

Benjamin Levine reminded us that all sub-committees need a purpose statement and a charter, and that those need to be approved by the Board. We will need to get this in front of the Board soon.

The dog issue should also be on the Covenants Committee task list.

Carol Lindsay reminded the Committee that a good place to start would be to make sure we understand all of the rules and regulations surrounding dogs in our community and on our trails. As she works at the Humane Society, she offered to spearhead this task.

Ellen Raynor cautioned the committee that we should not 'kick the can down the road' in regards to the dog issue, but that we attempt to resolve it as soon as possible.

Peter Sawyer reminded the committee that we are not just interested in codifying the rules surrounding dogs, but also the rules surrounding horses.

Livia Quann reminded the Committee that we are not just looking at rule changes, but that our focus should be on education and etiquette. She also stated that we should be working toward consensus on the issue rather than enforcement.

The idea of a Sub-Committee was discussed as well as the purpose of a Sub-Committee. While dog policy is a big task, the Committee was reminded as to the contentious nature of e-bikes just a year ago, which has pretty much gone away with education, etiquette, and understanding.

It was decided that we will try and figure out how to work with the Covenants Committee at our next meeting.

VII. Possible Site Visits (availability and timeline). (4:00)

At the October meeting, John Groom suggested that the Committee do site visits to be able to better understand rails and trail management. Because of the current weather forecasts (and the chance of significant snow -yea!), this might need to be postponed until the spring.

The Committee was hopeful, but not certain, that we could do something during the Thanksgiving holidays.

John Groom stated that he thought it would be great to help create an informed Committee body if we really took it to heart and did site visits as a part of our meetings

by getting out for one hour and look at the projects that we're getting done and why we're doing it. The TOS Committee are representatives of the membership and it's important that there's two-way communication between the Committee and Staff and the Committee and Membership. He would like feedback from the Committee about what they can share with other members. There was positive feedback to this proposal, especially the fact that we would be getting out on the 'trails and open space,' which is our mission.

VIII. Summary of September 28 and November 2 Board Meetings (Budget & TMP) (4:10)

John Groom reported that his Department has a significant budget in the reserve replacement funding because that budget is tied to existing trails in the Trail Master Plan. If the trail was identified in the TMP to upgrade, then the money is there to do it. He is still using 2021 money in the budget and we are still carrying 2022 money. He is comfortable with the funding that he has and will need to get some feedback on priorities before he can really start to focus on giving the TOS some ballpark numbers for what those projects might cost. He is in the process of writing the Trails Master Plan Management Plan, which will be modified from input from the board. Signs are already being ordered for installation this coming (2023) summer. He realizes that because of the Tahoe Donner budgeting process, he can't sit on his surplus too long.

There was a short discussion concerning the thought within the Tahoe Donner community that there was a big budget surplus that could mitigate any large increases in the Homeowner Assessment. Benjamin Levine explained that the surplus was from 2021, as we did better with our Winter Amenities than expected, but that the surplus is needed in the event that we have down years (poor winters). This surplus can easily be rolled over into the Replacement Reserve or the Development Fund. This surplus has absolutely no effect on the budget for Land Management. There are projects that are in the Trails Master plan that have already been approved and are in the pipeline. That money has already been budgeted and is not going away. The Board is well aware of staffing issues in regards to Land Management in general and Trails in particular.

IX. Action and Discussion in Regards of the two Previous Board Meetings (4:20)

John Groom told us that he Board is very impressed by the Trails Master Plan and that there were eight items which they had questions about which aren't major. The Board wanted to know more about timing and prioritization which are the purview of John Groom and Leslie Loveland in terms of what projects they can get it done. There was also a discussion of how a Class 1 bike trail through Tahoe Donner could provide

emergency access to Tahoe Donner, so that in the event of an emergency, emergency vehicles will be able to access Class 1 trails into Tahoe Donner in the event that the Tahoe Donner Community needs to leave at the same time.

The Board asked for clarification about the dog and equestrian policies so that's is a part of the Trails Master Plan that will need to be on the Committee's Task List.

There was discussion of how much the Board should be involved in the Master Plan, and the consensus was that the Board needs to let staff do their job.

There was a question about phrasing around the TOS Committee's involvement and how much input the TOS Committee should have. Basically what came out of this discussion is that staff value the consultation that they have with the TOS Committee and that we are a representative of the membership and they appreciate that we are not dictating to staff what needs to be done.

There were also questions about public use and how that fits into the Trails Master Plan. What came out of that discussion is that the Board will work with Legal to make sure that everyone understands the parameters regarding the agreements that Tahoe Donner has made with outside agencies and organizations and whether those can be grandfathered out. The Board was looking to see if we can opt out of some of these agreements at some point. Enforcement of the Trails Master Plan was also discussed. There will be executive sessions about Public Use. There shouldn't be any substantial changes to the TMP before it is fully approved by the Board.

Benjamin Levine reminded the Committee that there are documents floating around going back to 1990 dealing with the issue of Public Access.

Benjamin also stated that kudos really go to John Groom because he did a fabulous job of presenting the TMP, clarifying any misunderstandings, and answering questions. He made it much simpler for the Board

John Groom stated that knowing that he has a Committee behind him is very helpful, and he thanked us for our support.

X. Upcoming Meetings and Meeting Adjournment (4:30)

Peter Sawyerr asked if there was any other business. Hearing none, stated that he and John would hang around after the meeting if anyone wanted to talk. He also stated that if it didn't snow too much over the trail that is north of the boardwalk at the Alder Creek Adventure Center, that

Committee members should go take a look at it as a great example of what ‘family friendly trails’ could look like. It is a beautiful piece of work, and Leslie deserves all of the credit for it.

There being no objections, the meeting was adjourned, with the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, Dec 7, 2023 at 3:00 pm.

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