

MARTHA'S VINEYARD LAND BANK
UNIVERSAL ACCESS COMMITTEE

MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

167 MAIN STREET
EDGARTOWN, MA

GOAL: TO DISCUSS CURRENT UNIVERSAL ACCESS POLICY

REQUESTED BY: IAN PEACH, LAND SUPERINTENDENT, MVLBC STAFF

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER: Pam Goff, David Vigneault, Susan Silk

STAFF PRESENT: Ian Peach

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT AT CALL TO ORDER: Jack Knowler, Sundry Smith

PUBLIC PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER: Richard Cohen

CALL TO ORDER: 4:35 PM

PUBLIC INPUT: None

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES (dated April 12, 2018): APPROVED after discussion and a motion by Susan Silk and seconded by Pam Goff:

Note: Susan Silk requested that the minutes dated from the April 12th 2018 meeting are amended to reflect here understanding that benches should have backs and arm rests and could be placed at a 1-mile point into trail system, instead of every mile.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Update on recent projects and local wood benches

Ian Peach introduced the documents on the table, showing completed bench installation projects made with locally harvested black locust. He also spoke about the completed census of all purported Universal Access (UA) properties and the document: *Universal Access on Land Bank Properties*, created by Mr. Peach. He explained how the document may be integrated into future webpage upgrades to offer the accessibility information in a clear and appealing way to the public.

Pam Goff introduced the question of why we call the access program Universal Access, and would there be a better name? She explained how the varying spectrums of

accessibility, like people with low stamina, may simply require that they are made aware of the difficulty even if the trail is not fully "Universally Accessible". She also noted that there may be more properties that have accessible sections that are not on the official list.

David Vigneault brought up maintenance and a short discussion on how maintaining accessible trails takes time and capital and would need to be prioritized. Ian Peach thought that choosing one property to focus on and "bring up" to a certain standard of accessibility might be a good starting point to use as an example of cost, and labor, as well as to establish a standard to work from in the future.

2. Review of Document: *Universal Access on Land Bank Properties*

A discussion of the document ensued. Ian Peach explained that the accessible properties and/or trails were rated based on grade, surface, and distance.

David Vigneault brought up examples of different types of signs that indicate to the public the kinds of accessibility and Richard Cohen mentioned Federal Forest Service Accessibility guidelines as a precedent that the Land Bank could learn from. The Mass.gov Universal Access information was introduced as a resource as well. Multiple members wanted to have a clear definition of what Universal Access is and what existing trails may meet the standards?

Ian Peach explained the different types of typical surfaces used on trails.

Susan Silk wondered why certain trails were difficult verses easy?

Ian Peach introduced a concept that there was a visual presentation that would overlay all trails with levels of accessibility on different sections based on grade, surface, and distance. He explained that this could perhaps be integrated into the websites mapping and the MV Trails App.

Susan Silk expressed concern about not having the information on physical maps or at the trailhead. She also wanted the Land Bank to take the lead on forms of communication and thought it would be positive for public relations.

Sign standards were then discussed further, with all members were in agreement that the Land Bank could do more than simply a wheelchair logo handicap sign and space(s). Ian Peach said he would look into different ways to communicate at the trailhead as well as digitally to the public.

Susan Silk stated that the island population and demographic is shifting to be an aging population and therefore trails and accessibility should be ready to offer public access to this demographic. Pam Goff explained some sign projects the Land Bank is already undertaking.

Richard Cohen mentioned that when he looked on a state list of places with recreation accessibility, Martha's Vineyard was not well represented. He wondered why the bike path couldn't be on the list?

3. Name

After some discussion related to calling the Land Bank's accessibility program, Universal Access, Pam Goff questioned whether the name could be changed to Accessibility? Ian Peach added that accessibility could be graded and reflected visually to the public on digital and trailhead maps where appropriate. David Vigneault thought that the introduction that explains the grading system in the document *Universal Access on Land Bank Properties*, could be made to be more robust. Pam Goff thought if we could be broader in how we categorized accessibility on trails we could include sections of properties, like Middle Line Woods or Chilmark Pond, that were not formally considered accessible.

A short discussion about Peaked Hill's accessibility ensued.

Susan Silk offered concerns that there are places where a walker can not get cell service and this should be considered for safety. She also offered the idea that Committee members and others could be utilized as testers for accessibility on trails. She went on to say that it could be great for public relations.

Richard Cohen explained how wheelchair users often see things that other users may not. He then went on to say that perhaps the title of the program should be *Trail Accessibility*.

Committee members discussed the title idea and a motion was made to consider a name change and how that would relate to how the planning for accessibility takes place.

A short discussion about having portable toilet units bathrooms ensued and Ian Peach explained where and when the land bank currently places units.

Richard Cohen thought that the Land Bank could set a 5-year plan or goals that include budget and labor and set up a plan. Susan Silk thought underutilized properties could be targeted and David Vigneault agreed.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, committee members reiterated key conclusions from the meeting:

- Possible name change to *Trail Accessibility* and adjustment of mission/planning process and how information is shared with public using trail grading logic

(grade, surface, distance) and a visual way to overlay this on a digital or print map

- Research precedents for signs to convey accessibility beyond just a handicap sign

ADJOURNMENT: 5:55 PM

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