

DRAFT AGENDA

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 13 May 2021**

A G E N D A

Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/pgb-aewj-tzr>

Log -in and test Equipment 6:30 – 7:00

Business Meeting 7:00 – 7:30

1. Welcome, Call to Order
2. Acknowledgement of Mi'kma'ki territory
3. Approval of agenda
4. Minutes of previous AGM July 6, 2020 (attached)
 - a. Changes and approval
 - b. Business arising from minutes
5. Committee Reports for 2020-2021 (see attached)
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Treasurer's Report (vote required)
 - c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report
 - d. Maintenance Committee Report
 - e. Membership Committee Report
 - f. Events Committee Report
 - g. Communications Committee Report
 - h. Trail Stewardship Program Report
 - i. Advocacy and Policy Committee Report
 - j. Friends of BMBCL Report

Jessica Boyd
Frank Gibson
Mike Basford
Frank Gibson
Jane McKay-Nesbitt
Sharon Gibson
Alyssa Doué
Spencer Doué
Wendy McDonald
Diana Whalen
6. Nominating Committee Report for 2021-2022 (see attached)
 - a. Board of Directors
 - b. Officers

Votes required
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

9. Social Meeting: 7:30 – 8:00

Videos, photographs, and story telling

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 13 May 2021**

**Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/pgb-aewj-tzr>
6:30 for sign in, 7pm Business Meeting**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Maureen Manuge	Michelle Labossiere	Sharon Gibson
Frank Gibson	Kathryn Morse	Dave Murphy
Jessica Boyd	Elaine Perrott	Janet Copeland
Spencer Doue	Alyssa Doue	David Graff
Heather Leslie	Wendy Forrest	Sandy Mattice
Paul Berry	Wendy MacDonald	Shirley McIntyre
Linda Adamson	Devena Davis	Rafah DiCostanzo
Louise Grinstead	Fralick	Alexx Wells
Jane MacKay Nesbitt	Jeremy Freed	Charles Lienaux
Robert Manzer	Diana Whelan	Nargis deMolitor
Sophia Linefield – Guest from NSEN Communications		

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Announcements

HNWTA Chair Jessica Boyd welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:04pm

2. Acknowledgement of Mi'kma'ki territory

We are treaty people, we would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik People first signed with the British Crown in 1725.

3. Approval of agenda

Motion that the agenda be approved: Jessica Boyd.

Seconded: Charles Lienaux

Approved

4. Minutes of previous AGM July 6, 2020

No changes requested, no business arising from minutes.

Motion that the minutes be approved: Jessica Boyd

Seconded: Charles Lienaux

Minutes accepted and approved as written.

5. Committee Reports for 2020-2021

5a. Chair's Report.

Jessica Boyd

In this second year of the pandemic and in the midst of a terrible third wave of infections we can see how important local trails are to us all. They provide us with a fresh air, exercise, and a chance to see people, even if we cannot talk to them or get closer than 2 m to them. I walk the Mainland North Trail almost every day and see lots of people out there with me, I see the same people on their routine walks, and I know many dogs by name now. I have watched the birds migrate and the leaves cycle through their phases, I am excited to see spring flowers arrive and chuckle at the increasing number of beaver-chewed stumps.

Your HNWTA board has continued to work for you during the lock down. We have not seen each other for many months in real life, but we continue to hold virtual meetings monthly. I will let the heads of our committees highlight their activities, but know they are working hard for you.

Board of Directors. A few months ago, we were very lucky to recruit a new board member, Elaine Perrott. Elaine has taken on the difficult job of recording secretary and is responsible for taking notes during meetings and looking after some of our official documents. Thank you, Elaine!

Another new member, Michelle Labossiere, has recently agreed to serve on the board with us. We welcome you to Nova Scotia and to HNWTA Michelle.

Sadly, this year we will say goodbye to two board members: our longest serving board member, Wendy McDonald, and Heather Leslie who has served with us for over 5 years. Wendy has worked on the board since its founding in 2003 and is almost solely responsible for our reputation as a guiding force in trails and nature in the area. Thank you, Wendy, for all you have done.

Two other people deserve special credit. Alex Wells has taken on the job of our social media officer, you may have seen her at our events with her camera out. She keeps us up to date on Facebook and the Twitter verse. Thank you Alexx.

Irina Valiquette designed the new signs for our dog bag dispensers. Take a look at them the next time you are out.

Capital Projects: Unfortunately, our two large Active Transportation (AT) projects are on hold until HRM is able to allocate sufficient funds and person hours to the projects. These are the extensions of the Fleetview Trail and the Mainland North Trail. Our other capital project, to extend the network of recreational paths in the Mainland Common is also on hold while we recruit help with contract writing and project management. If you would like to help with this exciting project, please let me know.

We have plans to install a wheelchair accessible picnic table with landscaping near our kiosk at the Canada Games Centre parking lot. We have requested funding from local HRM councillors for this project.

Operational Funding: This past year, 2020-2021, we received \$3,240.00 from HRM for operational funding and trail maintenance, \$1,000 from the NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage for trail maintenance, \$1,000 from the TD Parks People. See the Treasurer's report below for all the details.

The HRM departments that work with and fund local trails groups such as ours have undergone some internal organizational changes this year. As a result, we now apply for and receive operational funding from the Parks and Recreation Department instead of Transportation and Public Works. There are slightly different procedures to apply for these funds, different funding streams available to us, and different contact persons. We are working through these changes.

Other Activities: I am saddened to report the passing of our dear friend and supporter Dave Putnam. Dave reached out to us a few years ago wanting to help us promote ourselves in a more professional and modern way. We were grateful for the help and I learned a lot from my conversations with him. His passing means we will not continue with plans to hold our second annual FootPrints Community event.

Support for other organizations: We continue to support two local green initiatives with advocacy efforts: Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition and the Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Society.

Partners: We work closely with many other groups and institutions, including: Ducks Unlimited Canada, Friends of Clayton Park, HRM Libraries, Canada Games Centre, ISANS.

Every member of your board has worked hard this past year despite the difficulties inherent in the lockdown rules. It is, as always, a pleasure to work with such dedicated and capable people.

5b Treasurer's Report

Frank Gibson

BANK BALANCE APRIL 1, 2020	\$ 28,913.90	
INCOME:		
Trail Metre Sales		
Membership	\$ 469.25	
Donations	\$ 203.15	
Maintenance - HRM	\$ 3,240.00	
Maintenance - Province	\$ 1,000.00	
Avis Foot Prints	\$ 500.00	
TD Parks Project	\$ 1,000.00	
Ducks Unlimited	\$ 78.59	
Canada Games Kiosk	\$ 1,500.00	
Other Income	\$ 1,709.29	
Current Liabilities		
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 9,700.28	
EXPENDITURES:		HST
Insurances:	\$ 735.36	
Office	\$ 100.93	\$ 9.91
Website	\$ 287.50	\$ 37.50
Membership (NSTF, RJSC	\$ 351.15	\$ 30.00
Maintenance Tools/supplies	\$ 429.44	\$ 56.21
Maintenance Materials	\$ 884.86	\$ 106.30
Meetings/travel/tolls/workshops/events	\$ 325.05	\$ 7.17
Printing	\$ 1,166.50	\$ 152.15
Can Fed Seniors Action Grant	\$ 3,947.55	\$ 212.43
TD Parks Project	\$ 709.86	\$ 84.32
Avis Foot Prints	\$ -	
Ducks Unlimited	\$ 78.59	\$ 10.25
Canada Games Kiosk	\$ 1,495.00	\$ 165.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 150.63	\$ 8.37
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 10,662.42	\$ 879.61
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31, 2021	\$ 27,951.76	
TOTAL HST		\$ 879.61
HST TO SEPT. 30		\$ 328.47
HST OCT.1 FF		\$ 551.14

**Motion that the Annual Financial report be approved: Frank Gibson
 Seconded by Maureen Manuge
 Approved**

5c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA)

Mike Basford

HNWTA has been an active member of HRTA, the group that brings together almost all organized trail groups in HRM, for most of its existence. HNWTA is among the majority of groups that have trails entirely for human-powered trail use, the two exceptions in western HRM having a legacy of motorized uses.

The activity of HRTA has been the result of volunteer work by members of the separate trail associations, recently numbering 23. Most of these individuals also are themselves very active in the operations of their own groups. This can present a challenge in finding additional commitments to leading HRTA.

HRTA members up to 2019 worked hard on strategic planning and on issues such as motorized use, the absence of HRM funding for “recreational” trails [meaning not Active Transportation or Shared Use Pathways], which resulted in positive change. There were also efforts to source funding for administrative support, and define such a position, which did not have the desired outcomes. Despite these efforts, and in parallel with changes in how HRM administers funding for trails, and of course the pandemic, HRTA last year reached an impasse. No formal meetings were held.

There is hope among many member groups that we can form a network to fill some of the roles of HRTA without the administrative burden it has involved.

5d. Maintenance Committee Report

Frank Gibson

Approximately 25 different persons participated in one or more trail maintenance events small and large during the 20-21 fiscal year, for a total of 189 person hours.

June 28, 29 - 75 person hrs were spent on clean ups at Belcher's marsh and the mainland common loop. On Oct 17, - 59 person hours were spent refurbishing the common loop trail wood chip surface, On Oct 31, 18 person hours were spent refurbishing the Old Coach Rd. Trail surface,

The other hrs were spent by one or two persons, repairing bridge surface, bridge rails, benches, & kiosks on the several trails in our catchment area. Also, efforts were made to clean up the remains of camp sights situated close to some of our trails.

Not included in the above numbers are the many hours spent by our trail monitors ensuring the safe condition of our trails and monitoring and replenishing the doggie bag dispensers. Two new dog waste bag dispensers were installed on the Mainland North Trail, one on the connection to Turnmill Park, and another on the connection to Mary Clayton Park.

5d. Events Report for 2020-2021

Sharon Gibson

Like many other organizations we had to make changes, adjustments and postpone some events this year. For the in-person events, we were mindful of following public health protocols, guidelines and practices.

Our first event was an online photo contest. There was tremendous interest, lots of entries of photos taken on our many trails. The photos were judged by a panel of three and great prizes were awarded to the winners. Some of the photos were printed, with permission, and made into greeting cards.

A week- end trails clean up was held in the Spring in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. Volunteers collected tons of garbage from the Common Loop and Belcher's Marsh trails.

The third annual Winter Tree for the Birds event was held in the mainland commons area in partnership with ISANS. Many new Canadians came out to build simple bird feeders on a sunny cold day in November.

The overall theme of events this year can be summed up with the phrase Walking and Talking. We led walks for hundreds of community members. We started with our annual fall walk, in partnership with Hike Nova Scotia and the library, on Tuesday afternoons in October.

In February and March, we rented indoor track at the CGC and offered an opportunity to walk inside, away from cold and wintery conditions.

We launched a new walking program in partnership with NS Walks, a project of HNS. The program is aimed at those who do not often get out for a walk. The walking groups, led by four new HNWTA volunteers are currently on hold until they can safely resume.

Funds from a federal grant, Education and Social Development Canada, were used to purchase 15 pair of Nordic walking poles which we donated to the Bedford Branch of the library. The funds also paid for the indoor track rental.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gibson, Events Coordinator

5e. HNWTA Membership Committee – 2020

Jane McKay-Nesbitt

“Your membership matters! There is strength in numbers.”

Committee members: Sharon Gibson, Alyssa Doue, Jessica Boyd, Jane McKay-Nesbitt (Chair)

Membership numbers: As of April 31, 2021, there are 185 paid up members. 65 memberships are up for renewal on July 1, 2021.

Responsibilities of the membership committee include:

- Keeping paper and online membership application forms current
- Welcoming new members (email); sending new members a membership card and badge; enrolling new members in HNWTA newsletter; letting other Board members know about new members' volunteer interests; monitoring membership online fee payments
- Encouraging participants in HNWTA activities to join the HNWTA
- Managing the membership renewal process by sending reminder emails
- Keeping membership records up to date
- Participating in hosting volunteer appreciation events

New membership category: Families are now able to join the HNWTA for \$30 for 3 years, and renew their membership for \$25 for three years.

Online membership applications and payment system: In the fall of 2020, our membership applications and payment system were set up on our website. Alyssa Doue, Spencer Doue, and Frank Gibson were instrumental in establishing this system.

Membership Survey – October 2020. 55 members responded to a survey to determine the reasons why people join the HNWTA. The main reasons the respondents are involved in the HNWTA are to:

- Connect with other people who care about green space and trails
- Learn from and share knowledge with others
- Promote trail use; be involved in and encourage nature-based activities

The profile of the 55 members who responded to the survey is as follows:

- Over 75% use the trails at least once per week
- Over 69% are female
- Over 87% have graduated from University or Community College and 43% have a graduate degree
- Over 61% are retired and over 29% are employed full or part time
- Over half live in Clayton Park and over 19% don't live in the HNWTA area
- Over 42% have lived in the HNWTA area for longer than 10 years
- The most frequently used trails are the Mainland North Trail, the Belchers Marsh Park Trail, and the Mainland Common Loop Trail

Member appreciation- January 2021: In January 2020, we hosted a volunteer appreciation dinner for volunteers for 2019. Due to Covid, this year we sent out thank you notes and Tim Horton gift cards were sent to 54 members and friends who supported the work of the HNWTA (e.g., trail monitors, trail maintenance, assisting with special events) over the past year. They were well received.

Thank you: A huge thank you goes out to Sharon Gibson who very effectively and single handedly managed the membership process (before online membership applications and payment options!) for the past several years and oversaw the growth of memberships to the 185 people it is today! Sharon turned over the responsibilities to Jane McKay-Nesbitt, in September 2020.

Respectfully submitted:

Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair

5f. Communications Report

Alyssa Doué

This year was an important one for communications. When our parks and trails closed, a lot of mixed messages were being sent, so we tried to make sure people were kept as up-to-date on the details as possible. The committee continued to send out monthly newsletters, and we've recently transitioned to using MailChimp. This is a great method for us since it shows us which links are most important to our readers and how many people are engaging in the newsletter and links.

A new volunteer has joined the committee, and she is excelling at maintaining our social media presence! She is also a wonderful photographer and joins our events to help add photos to our online presence. Our social media is much more active now that she has taken the reigns!

We were also very excited to get set up for online membership application and renewal! Now members can sign up and pay online through our website; making it easier for everyone!

After our successful photo contest last year, we were able to update the photos on our website. Check out the rotating banner if you haven't seen the photos already! We have also updated our information kiosk that is located at the Canada Games Centre, and we've updated and printed more brochures for distribution. Next on the docket: The Belchers Marsh Brochure and the Old Coach Road fact sheet!

We're looking forward to another great year! As always, send us your comments and suggestions! ☺

5g. Trail Monitoring Committee Report

Spencer Doué

The HNWTA Trail Monitoring program has continued to run successfully in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic as the nature of trail inspections allows for distancing and a very low risk of exposure for volunteers. We currently have 24 registered trail monitor volunteers assigned to trails with at least one regularly active per trail during spring/summer. Trail Monitors continue to be active in notifying HRM 311 of issues and we have seen direct results from this such as new garbage bins and remediation of trail issues.

COVID-19 has unfortunately prevented me from meeting with new trail monitors who replaced three who stepped down during the year. I hope that as we move past this pandemic in due course that I can once again meet in-person with these trail monitors (as well as future volunteers!) as in-person sessions tend to be a great way to engage with new trail monitors.

We currently could use a regularly active trail monitor on the Mainland Common Loop trail as well as a second regularly active trail monitor on the Hemlock Ravines trail system (as it is a large park). There are also some people that don't submit inspection reports so I intend to follow up with them to find out if they are still interested in volunteering with HNWTA or if they do complete inspections, but then don't submit online reports (and thus try to encourage them to do so).

With regards to 2020 statistics (based on inspection reports submitted through our website – though it's important to note that I believe there could be more inspections being done but not reported through our website), a total of 109 inspections were completed with 36 different instances of issues being reported to HRM 311 (Appendix 1). In total, trail monitors spent over 64 hours voluntarily inspecting trails!

Overall, the program continues to go well and is largely self-functioning from an operation perspective. HNWTA is in regular contact with trail monitors and assists with any questions/comments that come up. It is expected that this program will continue to be successful in its mission of keeping an eye on the trails and reporting issues to 311, as well as promoting HNWTA to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Spencer Doué

5h. Advocacy and Outreach Committee Report

Wendy McDonald

The year has been a roller coaster for all of us but Trails have been a constant with plenty of dialogue and decision making happening behind the scenes! We have come to value our time on the active transportation and recreation trails in the wooded natural green spaces in our region including Fairview, Clayton Park & Wedgewood, Rockingham and Bedford South.

Trails have been enjoyed by families and individuals as documented through photography and socially distanced events. We look forward to engaging with the newly elected Council members and moving ahead with energy and understanding of the renewed HRM Vision and Mission, the new Trails Administration Order as it relates to our region and committee work and the Active Transportation projects proposed for our region. We said goodbye to two HRM Councillors who both supported our goals and ideas over time...thank you to Russell Walker and Richard Zurawski.

Fund raising & Planning – HRM funds were received (District & Parks) to support planning and rehabilitation of trail in the passive area of the Mainland Common. Expressions of interest were compiled but the challenges of Covid limited on the ground activity. Contractors will be engaged in the upcoming season for the work. Associated amenities, including maps, interpretive signs and benches may have to wait although a picnic table and bench are planned for a Thomas

Raddall green space. Mapping and Signage is needed for our trails and new funding will be sought once HRM's plans for trail signage templates are complete.

Partnerships & Networking – All levels of government and elected officials have an interest, large or small, in trails. We value networking opportunities that have helped support our trails and look forward to in person and onsite encounters in the future! HNWTA was engaged with many partners including Hike NS, NS Trails Federation, NS Outdoor Network, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, NS Environmental Network Education Caucus, Our HRM Alliance (re Green Network Plan and the 5 year Regional Plan review), Keshen Goodman Library, Atlantic Water Network, Friends of Clayton Park Litter Prevention Committee, WalknRoll and Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP). Engage Mainland North meetings encouraged interaction with community resources and residents; the need for a local HUB or meeting/storage space was put forward.

Communications & Community Engagement –Updates re HNWTA website & brochures continue. Interpreted walks and nature observations included during the International iNaturalist Nature Challenge helped define our Project and to identify local biodiversity. Attempts to learn more about a proposed new School construction in the 8 acres of woodlands adjacent to Mainland North Trail serving the student population of Fairview & Rockingham are ongoing. HRM webinars and surveys re AT for Bedford Highway, Bayers Lake and Windsor Exchange, Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park Trailhead amenity, as well as Dogs Off Leash and Rural Recreation continue. Mobility challenges of the built environment was an 'in the field' photo voice project with a Dal Planning student where 12 +/- sites were each documented, ongoing.

Wendy McDonald on behalf of the Board, May 2021

5i Friends of BMBCL Society Report

Diana Whalen

Presented orally at the meeting summarized here:

BMBCL now has a membership roll of 730 people. Membership is free and benefits include regular newsletters and invitations to special events. All HNWTA members are urged to become members of BMBCL too.

BMBCL continues their advocacy activities to acquire lands for the wilderness area. They have been instrumental in the acquisition of the 560-acre "Connector" piece, and most recently a 35-acre piece of land previously leased to the Maskwa Aquatic centre.

They sent a survey to all the candidates in the last municipal election (Oct 17, 2020) trying to make all candidates aware of the BMBCL goals.

BMBCL held a hike leaders' course taught by Mark Young. 10 -12 people are now certified to lead hikes in the area, which they will do as soon as the pandemic restrictions ease.

Over the past year BMBCL has collaborated with HNWTA on many activities including working with Heather Leslie to test water quality on many of the lakes in the wilderness area.

The very popular Pleine Air art event and show continues with gathering restrictions in place, the art can now be viewed on-line at the 14 Bells gallery.

6. Nominating Committee report 2021-2022

The following are presented as the Slate of Board Candidates for 2021-2022

- Mike Basford
- Jessica Boyd
- Alyssa Doué
- Spencer Doué
- Frank Gibson
- Sharon Gibson
- Michelle Labossiere
- Jane McKay-Nesbitt
- Elaine Perrott

Moved: Jessica Boyd

Seconded: Charles Lienaux

20 YES, 1 ABSTAIN

The Following Slate of Board Officers is presented for 2020-2021

- Jessica Boyd - Chair
- Frank Gibson - Treasurer
- Spencer Doué – Corporate Secretary
- Elaine Perrott – Recording Secretary

Approval of the Board Members as presented:

Moved: Jane McKay-Nesbitt

Seconded: Charles Lienaux

14 YES, 1 ABSTAIN

7. New Business

Suggestion from Charles Lienaux to name the Mainland Common loop trail after Bob and Wendy or put up a plaque.

Comments from members:

Louise Grinstead - Great idea!

Following Alexx - yes!

jane mckay-nesbitt - terrific idea

Nargis deMolitor - MacDonald loop sounds awesome; is fitting!

jane mckay-nesbitt - Thanks Charles for that suggestion. Much appreciated. Bob and Wendy are so deserving of our thanks.

H Leslie - Wonderful idea. I propose that it be named the Bob & Wendy McDonald Loop because there are many McDonalds in Nova Scotia, but only one Bob & Wendy team!

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm

A slide show of pictures submitted from last year's photo contest was presented to finish off the meeting.

Appendix 1 Trail Monitor Data 2020



