

**Halifax North West Trails Association
Annual General Meeting
27 June 2018, 7:00– 8:00 PM Keshen Goodman Library, Halifax.**

A G E N D A

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Announcements
2. Additions to and approval of agenda
3. Minutes of previous AGM June 13, 2017
 - a. Changes and approval
 - b. Business arising from minutes
4. Reports (see attached)
 - a. Chair's Report Jessica Boyd
 - b. Treasurer's Report Frank Gibson
 - c. Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) Report Mike Basford
 - d. Maintenance Committee Report Frank Gibson / Julian Gonzales
 - e. Events Committee Report Sharon Gibson
 - f. Communications Committee Report Alyssa Doué / Spencer Doué
 - g. Trail Stewardship Program Report Spencer Doué
 - h. Advocacy and Policy Committee Report Bob McDonald / Wendy McDonald
5. Board members for 2018-2019
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

Keynote Address: Mike Lancaster, Bluff Trail Stewardship Program.

**HALIFAX NORTH WEST TRAILS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JUNE 27, 2018
7:00 P.M.
KESHEN GOODMAN LIBRARY, HALIFAX**

**A P P R O V E D M I N U T E S
(approved at HNWTA AGM May 6, 2019)**

Attendance: There were 20 people in attendance including 6 Board members and HRM AT Staff member, Emma Martin.

Board members: Bob McDonald, Wendy McDonald, Sharon Gibson, Frank Gibson, Jessica Boyd, Mike Basford

Board member regrets: Heather Leslie, Julian Gonzalez

1. Welcome, call to order, announcements

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Jessica Boyd

Announcements: There were no announcements

2. Approval of the agenda/additional items

There were no additional items.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as circulated.

MOVED: Jessica Boyd

SECONDED: Mike Basford

MOTION CARRIED.

3a. Minutes of the last AGM – June 13, 2017

The minutes were reviewed by Jessica Boyd

MOTION: To approve the minutes as circulated.

MOVED: Charles Lieneaux

SECONDED: Bob McDonald

MOTION CARRIED.

The minutes will be available on the website.

3b. Business arising from the minutes

Any business arising will be covered in the following agenda items.

4. Reports were presented as circulated

a. Chairs' Report (attached) Jessica Boyd

The year's activities were highlighted by Jessica including changes in board members, several volunteer initiatives and working with HRM staff. Greater details are presented in each Committee Report.

b. Treasurers Report (attached) Frank Gibson

The financial report was presented by Frank. He acknowledged that an HST application is outstanding for possible rebates for 2 years.

MOTION: To approve the financial report as presented.

MOVED: Frank Gibson

SECONDED: Charles Lieneaux

MOTION CARRIED.

- c. **Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) (attached) Mike Basford**
Mike described HRTA and the role it plays on our behalf liaising with HRM AT staff. As one of 23 active member groups, we are represented by our chair on the HRTA Maintenance Committee and at bi-monthly meetings by Mike. Last year, an ad hoc HRTA committee, including Wendy McDonald, researched and reviewed the potential role for Recreation Trail with HRM staff and elected officials. Maintenance funds and Capital funds are received on application through the respective HRTA committees and peer review.
- d. **Maintenance Committee (attached) Frank Gibson**
Frank briefly described trail maintenance activities on the 2 trails we maintain, Old Coach Road and Mainland Common Loop, including our Canada 150 Trailgate celebrations when we had youth participation.
- e. **Events Committee (attached) Sharon Gibson**
Eleven hikes and walks were offered last year including participation in the Fall Hike NS series in partnership with Keshen Goodman Library. The winter snowshoe events, in collaboration with HRM and Hike NS were cancelled due to a lack of snow. Three Nordic Pole Workshops were popular for new users. Sharon acknowledged the participation of the many volunteer leaders and the planning committee.
- f. **Communications Committee (attached) Alyssa Doué**
A transition year for the new committee members, several positive steps have been taken to update the website, communications with members and contacts and the public. In addition, a display unit is ready for sharing when public events call for trail news! Individuals are encouraged to share photos which may be used in revision of any social media platforms.
- g. **Trail Stewardship Program (attached) Spencer Doué**
Spencer introduced a new opportunity for trail users to participate in monitoring the many trails we are stewarding with an eye to educate users and monitor risk.
- h. **Advocacy and Outreach (attached) Bob McDonald**
Bob spoke about several of the outreach and advocacy initiatives that the committee and other board members have been working on over the past year, generally in conjunction with outside boards or groups. These include Engage Mainland North, Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes which have successfully gone on to create a new society, and the HRTA Recreation Trails funding challenges. Communications through an e-Newsletter has helped to keep in touch with members and contact as well as the occasional Parkview News column.

Members and supporters present acknowledged the efforts of the volunteers as described by all the committee work.

5. Nomination Report:

The following slate was presented for the Board for 2018-19
 Mike Basford
 Jessica Boyd
 James Boyer
 Alyssa Doué
 Spencer Doué
 Frank Gibson
 Sharon Gibson
 Julian Gonzalez
 Heather Leslie
 Bob McDonald
 Wendy McDonald

There was a call for further nominations from the floor, there were none.

Put forward as officers for the upcoming year:

Jessica Boyd -Chair
Bob McDonald – Past Chair
Frank Gibson – Treasurer
Heather Leslie – Corporate Secretary

MOTION: To approve the slate of board Members

MOVED: Jessica Boyd

SECONDED: Anne Knight-Gorman

MOTION CARRIED.

6. New Business

Membership Maureen Manuge asked about membership statistics and there was discussion about the need for paid memberships. Other groups have refrained from charging memberships where so much volunteer time is given back to the group.

Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Society was acknowledged as a new group that will focus on next steps collaborating with partners, including HRM, Nova Scotia Environment and the public.

7. Adjournment

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Sharon Gibson

TIME: 7:45pm

Special Guest: Mike Lancaster and the Bluff Trail Stewardship Programme

Mike described the programme including monthly stewardship training which he delivers through the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO). To date, 84 trained stewards have given nearly 1000 volunteer hours. The programme was created in response to overuse of the Bluff trail, the 27 kms stacked loop system where 47 illegal fire pits and many camp sites have been removed. The focus of the volunteers is education of users and the Leave No Trace focus. Trail maintenance and remediation is ongoing in areas where trails have been expanded or side spurs created using natural found materials. Garbage has been reduced as a result of engagement with users. Summer students are an additional opportunity. New stewards are always welcome!

Full Committee Reports:

4a. Chair's Report

This has been my first year as chair of HNWTA and it has been a wonderful experience, I work with a competent and dedicated team of individuals who clearly love our neighbourhood, respect the goals of our association and enjoy spending time outside. I look forward to another good year with this outstanding team.

We lost a few members this year due to time conflicts and other responsibilities; I would like to thank Chris Redmond and David Richey especially for their service over the years. I would also like to thank Diane Arsenault and Doug van Hemesson for their work on the FaceBook and web pages.

A few months ago we realized we needed to recruit some more volunteers to the board and were able to bring in two incredibly capable young people to handle our social and print media communications. I have been amazed at what Spencer and Alyssa have accomplished in the short time they have been working.

We also recruited a new secretary, Heather Leslie, and an engineer, Julien Gonzalez, who is already building bridges.

I would also like to thank the Active Transportation group at HRM for their patience with me while I learn the ropes of city politics and processes.

We are most proud of four new projects that are almost completed now. These short neighbourhood connections to the Mainland Linear Trail were planned and proposed in 2017 and now allow wheeled access to the MLT from both Turnmill Park and Mary Clayton Memorial Park. One of the existing connections to the MLT from the Canada Games Centre has been paved, allowing snow clearing and improved winter access. The final connection improves the MLT access at the top of Westridge Dr., creating wheel chair parking spots and an accessible path to the upper parking lot and Dog Park.

We are currently in the middle of planning our next capital projects which will expand the network of Active Transportation trails in our neighbourhood. If any of you would like to be involved in this project, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted;
Jessica Boyd, Chair HNWTA

4b. Treasurer's Report

BANK BALANCE APRIL 1, 2017	\$ 16,277.85	
INCOME:		
Trail Metre Sales		
Membership	\$ 220.00	
Donations	\$ 52.00	
Maintenance - HRM	\$ 2,590.00	
Maintenance - Province	\$ 1,000.00	
Trail Gate Project	\$ 517.08	
HRTA Meeting	\$ 473.61	
Nordic Pole Project		
HST Rebates April 2013 -March 31 2015	\$ 3,327.59	
Other Income		
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 8,180.28	
EXPENDITURES:		HST
Insurances:	\$ 681.92	\$ 4.20
Office	\$ 291.71	\$ 34.79
Website	\$ 343.56	\$ 44.81
Membership (NSTF, RJSC)	\$ 261.15	\$ 30.00
Maintenance Tools/supplies	\$ 1,041.57	\$ 125.42
Maintenance Materials	\$ 409.08	\$ 31.73
Meetings/travel/tolls/workshops/events	\$ 567.13	
Printing	\$ 100.00	
HRTA Meeting	\$ 174.61	\$ 5.70
Trail Gate Project	\$ 517.08	\$ 25.74
Nordic Pole Project	\$ 516.79	\$ 47.84
Signage	\$ 442.34	\$ 57.70
Miscellaneous	\$ 701.19	\$ 24.86
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,048.13	
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31, 2018	\$ 18,410.00	
TOTAL HST		\$ 432.79

Respectfully submitted;
Frank Gibson, Treasurer

4c. Report on Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA)

HNWTA is among the 23 community-based organizations (groups) that form the HRTA. HRTA-member trails are designated for “Active Transportation” (non-motorized) use only with a few exceptions. The trails vary considerably in type, and range of land ownership -- including Provincial Parks, Provincial land along former rail corridors, and HRM land including parkland. These factors directly constrain the resources each group can readily access.

Halifax/HRM is represented by its Active Transportation (AT) agency in Project Planning & Design within the Transportation & Public Works business unit. That agency is mandated by the AT Policy Plan (approved by Council in 2014). As a result, city funding for trails that are considered recreational (not heavily used for journeys to work/school/shopping or on the job) is limited to some maintenance money.

Halifax seems to be unusual among Canadian cities in the degree to which it uses a community-based model of trail development and stewardship. This is applied selectively, instead using direct delivery by the city of more complex projects involving multiple land ownerships, and involvement of agents such as several city departments, NS Power, the Province, etc. The neighbourhood connections being built in June-July 2018 along the Mainland Linear Trail (an AT trail) are an example.

HRTA enables sharing of information on trails-related matters, and common procedures for each group to apply for taxpayer-based funding for trails projects, primarily capital (construction) or recapitalization (rebuilding), and maintenance. Of great benefit to governments such as the city is the potential for leverage of external funding sources, and the efforts of the many volunteers in HRTA and its member groups.

To fit the annual HRM Council-approved budgeted amounts, the appropriate HRTA committees (Capital or Maintenance) screen funding requests submitted by groups. HRM’s AT unit then decides the allocations of funds.

The board currently meets seven times per year. The more centrally located groups offer to host the meetings. Short hikes to show off the local trails usually precede the meetings. Quick sessions on a relevant topic introduced by an individual or group often precede the business meeting.

A group has one representative / vote in the board. Other individuals from the groups volunteer for the HRTA executive, HRTA’s standing and ad hoc committees and the city’s **AT Advisory Committee**. Jessica Boyd is currently serving on the HRTA Maintenance Funding Committee. Wendy McDonald is a HRTA rep to the Central Region of the Nova Scotia Trails Federation. HNWTA continues to have an active role in HRTA.

Respectfully submitted;
Mike Basford, HRTA Director for HNWTA.

4d. Maintenance Committee Report

We maintain two trails: The Old Coach Road Trail and the Mainland Common Loop. We also participate in the stewardship of the Belcher’s Marsh Trail and we have participated in capital projects regarding access to the Mainland Linear Trail.

The Old Coach Road Trail has a 4 ft. wide crusher dust surface. There were two or three minor washes and one other that would have gotten much worse if not attended to. It took 25 hours of volunteer work with gravel, wheel barrows and a dump cart to restore the surface. We also trimmed brush from the sides of some sections of the trail to maintain unobstructed access.

The Common Loop needed a wood chip intervention about the same as last year. Four and a half cubic feet of chips were spread by 48 volunteers working 2.5 hrs they were also involved in bush whacking to keep the trail clear. Later two volunteers spent 4hrs repairing a bridge. Many volunteers spent 2 hrs on Earth Day (April 22) cleaning Belcher’s Marsh and the surrounding Trail of garbage.

We are maintaining doggie bags in six dispensers at various trail locations. We have had repairs made to our kiosk, two defaced signs and one partially dislodged sign.

We are contemplating building basic bridges on the wilderness section of the Common Loop.

Respectfully submitted;
Frank Gibson, Maintenance Committee with Bob McDonald and Julian Gonzalez

4e. Events Committee Report

We enjoyed a variety of events this past year. In April, we partnered with the Friends of Clayton Park and participated in the annual Earth day clean-up of Belchers' Marsh. Throughout the year walks and hikes were organized for the following trails; Old Coach Road, Moirs Mill Run, Cabin Lake, Hemlock Ravine, Susies' Lake, Blue Mountain, Fox/Ash Lake, Belchers' Marsh, Mainland Common Loop, Mainland Liner Trail and Geizer Hill.

We participated in Hike Nova Scotia's annual guided hike event in the fall, by offering two guided hikes and partnering with the Keshen Goodman Library to offer walks in the neighbourhood every Tuesday afternoon in October.

We ran a large volunteer event in September, sponsored by Hike Nova Scotia, in honour of Canada 150. We had help from nearly fifty volunteers to do maintenance work on the Mainland Common Loop trail and followed up with a barbecue when the work was completed.

We offered to run a Nordic Pole walking group in the community.

Two snow shoe events were set up in partnership with the Halifax Recreation Department; unfortunately lack of snow cancelled both events,

This year we hosted a HRTA meeting and led a short hike before the meal and the meeting.

Throughout the year we receive requests from various groups to lead hikes, and are interested in preparing our volunteers to take on these events.

We could not offer these events without assistance from every Board member and friends of HNWTA. I am very appreciative of the efforts of the volunteers who have assisted our events this year. Volunteers include; Maureen Manuge, Shirley McIntyre, Pat Leader, Dorothy Smith, Penny Larocque, Susan Nasser, Audrey Peake, Jamie Boyer, Joe Kerekas and Diane Zwicker Arseneault.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Gibson, Events Chair

4f. Communications Committee Report

The past year was an excellent one for the HNWTA Communications Committee (consisting of Spencer and Alyssa Dou ). The Association's website was thoroughly cleaned-up, updated, and re-organized to facilitate easier use and navigability. This includes the addition of a Google Calendar to allow members/the public to view upcoming events, as well as more frequent updating to keep information current throughout the site.

The Committee also now has responsibility for the main HNWTA Gmail address (hnwta.contact@gmail.com) and during the coming year will look to retire the second unused Gmail address (hnwta.communications@gmail.com), as well as investigate the possibility of a website-hosted '@halifaxnorthwesttrails.com' email address (to portray a cohesive image to the public).

The Committee also took responsibility of the HNWTA Twitter account and updated the main page with new photos/information. The Committee made use of it during certain events such as Halifax Burger Week 2018 and the Hike NS 2018 Summit in Ingonish, Cape Breton. The Committee will continue to look for ways to increase our followers as this is a great way to promote events HNWTA hosts.

Recently, the Committee has updated the Association's poster-board display for use at different events. Up-to-date trail information has been added as well as new information on initiatives HNWTA supports, such as the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area regional park. During the upcoming months, the Committee is going to update the HNWTA informational pamphlet as this often accompanies poster-board displays.

Since January 2018, much has been done to simplify and organize communications with members and the public. As we move ahead with our new projects, we are hopeful they will further help HNWTA reach more people and grow our membership base!

Respectfully submitted;
Spencer and Alyssa Dou , Communications Chairs

4g. Trail Stewardship Program Report

Early in 2018, the Board of Directors identified the need for a Trail Stewardship Program to be designed and implemented by HNWTA. This would allow us to be more proactive in identifying potential issues (and remedying them) as well as provide an overall sense of how the trails are doing on a consistent basis. We view this is not only as a risk-management tool, but as a way to build our volunteer-base through providing a specific, targeted activity for potential volunteers to take on.

This will also increase our organization's visibility on the trails as volunteer stewards will have lanyards identifying them as inspectors. This way, if a community member is using the trail and notices the steward, they can ask about HNWTA, or they could provide feedback which can filter back to the Board and help us provide the best trail experience for users (or forward suggestions on to the HRM).

We believe the start-up work and costs for this will be minimal. We currently have a draft Trail Inspection Checklist largely complete, as well as a draft Policy & Procedure document to formalize the program. Volunteer-steward recruitment will be our largest obstacle as we envision an ideal number of two people per trail to facilitate less commitment from each volunteer when inspections are needed (i.e. bi-weekly inspections during spring/summer/fall and monthly inspections during winter – with two volunteers they would be able to alternate). Once lanyards are prepared, along with clipboards purchased and Inspection Checklists printed, we will meet with stewards to discuss the program, checklist, submission process, what is expected of them, as well as answer any questions. Then we can implement a schedule and start the inspections!

We believe this presents an excellent opportunity for HNWTA to provide better service to the community and would like to take this opportunity to initiate a call for volunteer stewards. This program will be as successful as our stewards make it and it is an excellent opportunity to become involved, but in a smaller and easier way.

Respectfully submitted,
Spencer Doué

4h. Advocacy and Outreach Committee Report

This committee liaised with several other established groups within HRM. Our HRM Alliance, which is a coalition of nearly 60 groups including business districts, non-profits and other trails groups advocating for both the HRM Green Network, and Complete Communities, is one such group. To learn more, check out www.OurHRMAlliance.ca

Directly related to trails, and Halifax Regional Trails Association, a small ad hoc group concerned with **Recreation Trails** was struck. Meetings were held with HRM staff and elected officials, and reports and guidelines were submitted for consideration. As a result of this work, HRM Parks and Recreation formally requested funds for Recreation Trail development in the 2018-19 HRM budget. Unfortunately funding was not approved for 2018-19 but work continues by volunteers on this topic to educate the decision makers. (Currently, HRM funds only Active Transportation trails with recreation trail left to random opportunities. The requirement to obtain matching funds from other sources, equal to that obtained from HRM, is a difficult issue for most groups considering building any trail or amenities.)

One of our key partners is The Keshen Goodman Library. A Health Authority grant through the Chebucto West Health Board, enabled us to purchase 21 pairs of **Nordic Poles** for borrowing like a book. Three training workshops for new users were held (with over 100 participants). Borrowing continues and other HRM library branches have copied our idea! The Library's participation in the Hike NS Fall schedule was well received, 5 walks were led by HNWTA.

HNWTA played a major role while celebrating Canada 150 with the BioBlitz or **Haliblit** with BMBCL as a key site, along with Point Pleasant Park. This event engaged community in identifying natural assets within the blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and sharing data on i-Naturalist, while participating in interpretive walks at Susies Lake, Charlies Lake and Fox Lake. Key partners were the Ecology Action Centre and Canadian Wildlife Federation.

Most important was the ad hoc group of concerned citizens, regarding the future of the **Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park**. Meetings were held with HRM staff and elected officials. The municipality seemed quite

reluctant to hold a public information meeting; so our advocacy group hosted a public meeting of our own attended by nearly 200 persons. This public interest has led to the formation of the Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes. Many of the board members are also members of HNWTA. Additional participation through subcommittees is anticipated, stay tuned! To celebrate International Women's Day, a hike was led into the area that HRM had recently announced as the first land purchase, Hobsons Lake, attended by the local MLA and others.

Engage Mainland North is a Roundtable of groups and residents of this area. Trails, Active Transportation and Transit have all been discussed over the past year along with the need to create effective wayfinding signage for users. Another topic discussed recently is the desire for a Community Garden because food security is a local issue. A registered group and an HRM space are needed. Councillor Zurawski is willing to support such a group. Proximity to a trail would help with access for some.

We welcomed several Syrian families to Belchers Marsh, along with translators and members of the Young Naturalists group. One father asked where he could invite family and friends to a BBQ. We have asked HRM about creating a gathering space with picnic tables and a BBQ; we had had no response yet. This space could also be near a trail.

Communications - Members and contacts were reached almost monthly by e-Newsletter; often shared with the public through our local neighbourhood paper, the Parkview News. We are grateful for their ongoing support to the community. Social media is shared among the board and our Facebook manager.

Respectfully submitted;
Wendy McDonald, Policy and Advocacy Committee Chair