

RATC Board Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2020
Online format (through Zoom)

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Andrew Bowman, Ron Bradbury, Bill Neilan, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Mike Vaughn

Others: Andrew Downs, Mark Farrell, Jill Pennington

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of October 5 Board Meeting Minutes (Susan Terwilliger):

Corrections: None

Approved: A motion was made to approve the minutes, it was seconded, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report (Terri McClure):

Terri did not attend. RATC's contribution to the VA 311 property acquisition project, around \$44,000, will be sent to Andrew Downs (Appalachian Trail Conservancy).

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 11/2/2020):

Total in Checking:	\$78,350.65
Total Monetary Assets:	\$93,162.13
Receipts (YTD):	\$41,767.23
Expenditures (YTD):	\$8,239.35

See RATC website <https://www.ratc.org/financial-report/> for full financial reports.

Membership Report (Jim Beeson):

RATC currently has 619 members, including eight who joined in October. Mark Farrell, former membership coordinator, has agreed to take this position again. Jim made a motion to nominate Mark as membership coordinator, Susan Terwilliger seconded it, and the motion passed. Mark will be formally nominated at the club's general meeting in March 2021.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Work hikes in October continued in the Dragon's Tooth area, installing steps and cribbing. Later in November, trail maintenance will shift to the Andy Layne trail area. Mike said he is still awaiting \$6,600 from the ATC license plate fund. Part of this money will be used to repair some of the 53 bridges in RATC's section of the AT.

- Jim Beeson noted that Mark Farrell's recent Facebook post about the club's new rock drill garnered 16,000 likes.

Hikemaster's Report (Bob Peckman):

Bob did not attend. Jill and Randy Pennington led a recreational group hike in October.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend and had no updates.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese did not attend. There were no shelter maintenance group hikes in October.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Bill Neilan):

Dave Youmans (Catawba Valley Ridgerunner) is leaving his seasonal position in November. There will be an end-of-year Ridgerunner Zoom debriefing meeting on November 11 and a send-off for Dave on November 8. Bill mentioned that Dave’s frequently updated water reports on the club’s Facebook site are a valuable resource for Triple Crown hikers and backpackers.

Land Management Supervisor’s Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill had no updates.

Newsletter Editor’s Report (Ron Bradbury):

The fall 2020 Trail Blazer is nearly complete. It has an interesting variety of reports, articles, and RATC history. The next (winter) Blazer will be published in January.

Updates and Action Items (Jim Beeson)

1. VA 311 Property Update (Andrew Downs)

Andrew reported that the purchase of the 8-acre VA 311 property next to the McAfee Knob parking lot has been made. Closing will be on December 15. This land will be held by ATC through the Conservation Fund until it reverts to the National Park Service. It is hoped that permanent restrooms and bearproof trash receptacles, together with improved parking, will follow.

2. Dragon’s Tooth Camping Prohibition – Discuss and Vote

At the October 5 board meeting, Bob Peckman suggested asking the U.S. Forest Service to reclassify Dragon’s Tooth as a no-camping area (like McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs) because of overcrowding. Since Bob was not at tonight’s meeting, Jim suggested postponing a vote until Bob can be present. This issue may be best dealt with through the Visitor Use Management plan, which can study and evaluate the impact of camping on the area.

3. Membership Coordinator – Mark Farrell

See membership report above.

4. McAfee Knob Parking Issues

The parking situation in and around the McAfee Knob lot on VA 311 has worsened this fall. People cannot legally park on 311 in posted No Parking areas in front of the lot, and those who park along adjacent VA 864 (Old Catawba Road) risk having their vehicles ticketed or towed. On October 24, more than a dozen hikers returned to find their cars gone. There are warnings about this on the RATC website and on the club’s Facebook page.

- Parking alternatives include the Catawba Center, using a Park and Ride, hiring Lyft or Uber, using a RATC shuttle driver, and coming on a weekday. It might also be possible to close one side of 864 to parking and allow it on the other side (to avoid blocking the roadway). Long term, a National Park Service hiker shuttle may be created.

Calendar:

December 7

RATC Board meeting (virtual)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.