

WARRANT ARTICLE #35 – THE GREEN LINK

What is the goal of Warrant Article #35?

The goal of Warrant Article #35 is to increase access to the trails in Rye Forest to establish a direct and more commonly used path from the center of town (RJH) to the Recreation Area. Among other things, this will link students, athletes, and families to the town's recreation resources in a safe and healthy way.

Specifically, the warrant article seeks to establish a Committee to explore the feasibility of expanding one of the existing trails.

What about the concern that this Committee will recommend a paved pathway or some other intrusive development in the Rye Forest?

A paved pathway is not the goal, nor is it a possible outcome. The trails in Rye Forest are already in a Conservation Easement which means they are subject to strict protections and limitations. These protections are proscribed by law and can't be changed. Necessarily, the Committee will need to operate within the context of the restrictive easement.

Why a Committee and why not just leave it up to the Conservation Commission?

The purpose of the Warrant Article is to increase use and access. While the Conservation Committee has jurisdiction over the Rye Forest, the discussion regarding who would benefit from expanded use is broader than the scope of their authority. Specifically, the Committee would be comprised of stakeholders - - the groups of citizens who would benefit from expanded usage (i.e., Rye Rec, RJH, Public Safety, citizen representatives from the town leagues and scout troops that use the recreational fields and facilities. Again, by necessity, the Committee would need to report findings and recommendations to the Conservation Committee.

What kind of things would the Committee suggest?

During the town Deliberative Session, a well-respected resident spoke against the Warrant Article, stating that it wasn't necessary. In his estimation, the trail is "just fine" the way it is. Ironically, he then went on to suggest three improvements that he'd like to see: 1) adding signage, 2) fixing some of the culverts, and 3) addressing all the rocks and roots in the trail section adjacent to the cemetery. The Committee would accept recommendations like these. And the Committee would welcome input from the community, even from those who purport to oppose it.

What about the people who use the Forest every day - and like it the way it is?

The Rye Forest is a community asset. Supporters of Green Link believe expanding the use of this asset will only serve to strengthen the community.