

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 22, 2021

Time: 7:03 p.m.

Place: Internet/Zoom call hosted by Beth O'Connor

Attendees:

Members: Andy Brengle, Co-Chair, Wayne Castonguay, Co-Chair, Erin Coates-Connor, Katie Hone, Ralph Williams, Andre Lacroix

Associates: Ed Monnelly

Staff: Beth O'Connor, Open Space Steward

1. Citizen queries

None.

2. Minutes from January 25th, 2021 meeting

Two amendments to the minutes were proposed by Ralph and Andy. Andrea moved to accept the minutes with amendments. Katie seconded. Passed unanimously.

3. OSR Plan 2020 – EEA Revisions to Date

Beth received confirmation from Melissa that MA DCS does want us to make the survey available offline. Katie is helping with edits. We'll figure out how to do outreach with the paper copies. We will likely drop some off at various locations and make an announcement about how to request a paper survey. Hopefully by next meeting we will be closer to being done with revisions.

4. Greenbelt Priority Land Protection Mapping Project

Greenbelt reached out to Beth about a project they are conducting; a GIS mapping project of unprotected land in Essex county they want to prioritize. The Town has done a similar exercise, and Beth thinks it would be good to use Greenbelt's expertise to help us expand on our own efforts. Beth sent Greenbelt our data on Ipswich lands. Kristen Grubbs and Beth are meeting with Greenbelt next week - invitation extended to anyone on OSC interested. When they are done mapping, they will share their data with us. The meeting will be Tuesday, March 2nd at 10AM. Beth will ask Abby at Greenbelt to send invitations to those interested.

5. Proprietors / GNCA Concept Trail Access Plan

Wayne followed up with Beth after last month's OSC meeting about the potential land on the air force parcel. The parcel the town owns on Great Neck (Great Neck Conservation Area) isn't currently open to public access because of constraints (challenging terrain and vegetation / wetlands along all the parcel frontage). If trails can be established on the air force parcel, it would give us some accessible frontage to expand trails into the Great Neck Conservation land. Wayne and a local property owner created a map about 10 years ago laying out potential trails on this land. There are lots of variables to figure out how to get in and make the land accessible.

6. UMass Amherst Cost of Service Study

Andy got a data dump from Kristen Grubbs at the Assessor's office and will be working those numbers into the tool. Andy estimates the analysis might take a couple more months to complete.

7. GEPD Zoning Article amendments for ATM

The Planning Board has made amendments proposals to the Great Estate Preservation Bylaw (GEPD) to accommodate the property at 55 Waldingfield Road. The Select Board is voting on the amendments tonight to send them back to the Planning Board to open for public comment. The first public comment meeting will be held March 11th, with potential secondary meeting on April 1st. Beth is sending OSC members the current and amended language to review.

8. Open Space Manager Position Update

Beth shared that there's nothing new to report on the proposal to reconfigure some of the current positions in the Planning Department to cover this work. If the proposal doesn't move forward in the next month or so, then the town may post the position to the public again.

9. Open Space Steward Update

A year ago, Beth was working to install a public access dock on Peatfield street. This was put on hold because of Covid, but the work is beginning again. Beth is working on fundraising and securing other funding for this project.

Farm access road on the koseneski property off Mile Lane: Developer is going to begin the road construction process soon by clearing trees and establishing the roadbed. The roadbed will be laid out based on land specs approved by the Planning Board. Funding is not yet secure for completing the road construction, but the Planning Department is currently working on getting quotes.

Property at 220 High Street – Rosewood Development: This area comprises about 7 acres of land that won't be developed along some fairly densely developed land. There's been a long, drawn-out litigation with the landowners. Beth walked the land recently with landowners and the chair of the Conservation Commission.

10. Other Items not Reasonably Anticipated

None

11. Executive Session and Adjournment

Ralph moved to enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing land acquisition due to the potential sensitivity of the negotiations, and to adjourn from there without returning to open session, seconded by Andrea. Unanimously voted.

Motion to enter executive session moved by Wayne, seconded by Andrea. Unanimous by roll call vote at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Coates-Connor