

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 24, 2023

Time: 7:05 p.m.

Place: Town Hall Room B2

Attendees:

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

Associates: Ed Monnelly, Larry Eliot

Staff: Molly Shea, Open Space Manager, Beth O'Conner Open Space Steward

1. Citizen queries

None

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes (March 27, 2023)

Andrea moved to accept the minutes from the October 2022 meeting, seconded by Katie, passed unanimously.

3. 2023 Goals & Priorities

The committee reviewed Molly's document. Molly reached out to Greenbelt and ECTA about the trail connections goal in general. She advocated for a written criteria & procedures document to guide trail connection work and will connect to Carol Lloyd of ECTA for input. Monty asked what the threshold of due diligence should be before engaging the landowner? Andrea thought it was tough to predict up front. Ralph wondered about the cost/benefit of having a formal process document since each case is unique. Molly advocated for a similar process document for each goal.

The committee discussed the rest of the goals document such as updating bylaws, updating/prioritizing bond list, etc. John Muldoon will consider a regular open space column. Katie will ask. Erin will take on an article for summer, Katie will do fall, Andy spring. Beth thought we should have a story map on website. Wayne reviewed the work of the prioritization subcommittee and the top 6 parcels were discussed. Need to finish all high priority parcels before next meeting. Ralph discussed the Jewett Hill trail connection aspiration. Beth reported that ECTA is updating their town-specific trail maps. What about Town-owned lands that aren't formally protected such as Pony Express? Marty asked about a trail at 14 Scott Hill Road. Members felt it was not a priority but it should be documented as potential.

4. Staff Updates

Molly reported that she gave notice not to return from maternity leave. Last day will be May 22. Open Space intern starts on May 22. Name is Rowan Galanis. Committee discussed problems with limited hours and hourly rate for the Open Space Manager and how difficult it will be to attract a good candidate and achieve stability in the position, let alone not being enough hours to meet the needs. Wayne felt it was a deliberate attempt to undermine the program as the fund can afford more.

5. Meeting schedule

Members discussed the summer schedule and relevant items at the May Town meeting.

6. Other Items Not Reasonably Anticipated

The Marini Farm lease on Mile Lane was discussed. Needs to go to town meeting. Also an easement at the former Gilbert place y the dam was discussed.

7. Executive Session/adjourn

A motion to enter Executive Session not to return to open session was made by Wayne at 8:50 and seconded by Erin; unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Castonguay