

Public Safety Property Reuse Working Group
April 26, 2023, 6:30 PM
Ipswich Town Hall
25 Green Street, Resource Room

Minutes

Working Group members present: Gordon Harris, Chair, Linda Alexson, Janet Craft, Donald Greenough, Laurie Paskavitz, John Sarni, Paul Seaman

Not present: Scott Glosserman, Michael Dougherty, Jeff Poirier

Also present: Carolyn Walfield, Tanya Rosenbaum

Gordon Harris called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Citizens Queries: None

Report on Bialek Park Site Visit

Gordon, Janet and Linda met with Stephen Crane (Town Manager) and Rick Clarke (DPW Director) at the site on April 3. The site will need Conservation Commission approval, and the wetlands will need to be flagged. There was discussion about raised beds. The Town Manager indicated the town should have control of the site. Janet sent the draft rules to DPW, which forwarded them to Jeff Putur (Parks & Cemeteries Department). Jeff's department would likely coordinated operations and work with the garden representatives. It is uncertain when the water line work could be done.

Community Gardens Discussion/Recommendation

There as general discussion about the Bialek Park site. The wetlands buffers are 25 feet "no touch" and 40 feet "no disturb". ConsCom might give a waiver for fencing. The largest impact would be creating a pad for a shed and digging fence posts. Tanya estimated that an "agricultural" fence would cost around \$17,000. Don mentioned the community gardens at New England Biolabs and suggested Tanya visit them. Biolabs has raised beds and fencing and the gardens are located right across from Biolabs' front door. Don will send Gordon contact information, and Gordon will send it to Tanya.

Gordon asked Carolyn about the differences between the Bialek Park idea and what the gardeners had at Pineswamp Road. She has concerns about investment of money knowing there are many other competing town interests. They would like to have 32 plots, each 16x16 feet. She likes the public park idea, it has greater visibility.

Carolyn said this project would require 304 yards of composted soil. Estimated cost would be \$14,000, but she anticipates 200 yards may be donated. Perhaps there are matching fund grants available. Laurie mentioned the town's composting program "Black Earth". Residents who participate are eligible to receive free compost, and she is certain many do not take it. Perhaps that leftover compost could be donated to the community gardens. Janet discussed exploring how to find funding, suggesting a non-profit sponsor.

Don raised the issue of Bialek being town land and the first step needs to be Select Board approval of the site. Maybe a non-profit could then lease or manage the community gardens.

The group reviewed and discussed the draft recommendation to the Select Board. Many suggestions and edits were made, and Linda will revise it and send it to Gordon. Discussion then turned to whether

the recommendation should be approved contingent upon having the wetlands delineation or if we should wait until we have all of that information. Once the flagging is done, Carolyn would be able to better assess the number of plots that could be available and let the working group know whether the site would work. There were 20 plots at the Pineswamp site and we would want to have 32 so new people could have an opportunity to garden.

It was decided to hold off on the recommendation to the Select Board until the wetlands have been flagged and Carolyn can report back. We should schedule another meeting in May.

Report for May Annual Town Meeting

Gordon shared his draft report for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. There was discussion regarding the status of the working group given that the Select Board had asked us to suspend work on the existing police and fire stations pending final decisions about the new public safety complex. The group discussed the town meeting report and made some edits.

Vote: Donald moved to accept the town meeting report with edits. Janet seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Donald moved that the Chair write to the Select Board to ask for instructions of the Working Group's continued role. Laurie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Laurie Paskavitz moved to approve the February 22, 2023 minutes. John Sarni seconded. Motion passed 6-0; Donald Greenough abstained.

New/Old Business

John Sarni asked to discuss the Harvard Study that was presented to the Select Board. The study is online on the Town website, and the Select Board's meeting can be watched on ICAM's website. The consensus of the group was that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting, and Chase Delano and Sam Raymond from the Ipswich Partnership should be invited. Gordon will reach out to them.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 6:30 PM

Adjourn

Vote: Laurie Paskavitz moved to adjourn. Donald Greenough seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Submitted by Linda Alexson