

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 26, 2023

Time: 7:02 p.m.

Place: Town Hall Room B2

Attendees:

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

Associates: Ed Monnelly

Staff: Beth O'Connor Open Space Steward, Open Space Intern Rowan Galanis

1. Citizen queries

John Doonan from the Housing Partnership inquired about potentially partnering on affordable housing and specifically about 161 Topsfield Road. Committee members expressed enthusiasm for working together. We agreed to look at the bond list for other appropriate properties.

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes (May 22, 2023)

Wayne moved to accept the minutes from the May 2023 meeting, seconded by Katie, passed unanimously.

3. Pedestrian & Cycling Advisory Board

Brian Hone and Chris Chapman represented the committee to discuss partnering on a right of way project in Ipswich. Basically conducting a comprehensive inventory, documentation and ultimately making them available to the public. The committee was enthusiastic about the idea. Ralph recommended engaging ECTA and Beth recommended we review subdivision plans. Ralph agreed to be the OSC liaison and Beth will be key in this project as she is the "last" in Town Hall with the appropriate institutional memory.

4. Open Space Intern

Beth introduced open space intern Rowan Galanis and committee members introduced themselves. Rowan summarized what she will be working on this summer and members offered to help where they could. Tasks include updating website, managing outreach and social media, and a story map. Erin in on deck to write a summer article for paper. A long discussion ensued about the new Linebrook trail maintenance issue. Rowan also updated the kiosks including a new one at Pony Express.

5. Open Space Manager position update

Beth updated the Committee on process. Interview happening Wednesday. Andy will represent the OSC on the interview team.

6. Community Gardens

Apparently the Building re-use committee who is charged with replacing the community gardens on Pineswamp road (lost due to the new Public Safety Building) is discussing the Open Space Fund as potential source of funding to develop the gardens at the selected replacement site at Bialek Park. Eric Josephson was in audience and shared his thoughts. Apparently, Pony Express no longer in play as potential site. Wayne suggested that zeroing in on just Bialek was short sighted and that a broader inventory could be conducted maybe even as a way to leverage protection of a bond list property. Beth read the language on the purpose of the fund and committee members wondered if the fund could even be used for such a purpose given the language. The general consensus was that the committee felt it didn't have enough information to make an informed opinion or to provide guidance to the group and Beth will report that feedback to the appropriate people.

7. Bond List prioritization

Subcommittee reported on final list of the top 20 high priority properties remaining on the Bond. Andrea reported on the Egypt River site visit where many of the top tier properties are located. Greenbelt and USFWS refuge staff were on the trip.

8. Future meetings

The committee discussed the summer schedule. The consensus was to keep the July meeting but consider taking August off, depending on activity level/need to meet at that time.

9. Items not reasonably anticipated

Members used this time to continue discussion of some prior items as well as new ones. Ed asked about condition issue at Pony Express fields. Beth explained. What about non-resident use of community gardens and should Ipswich resident dollars support that use? Monty updated folks about the pursuit of the new trail in the upper field at Kamon. Apparently Greenbelt has put it on their list to address in 2024. Monty interprets this as a lower priority for them. Wayne felt that since this was in the private farmers lease area it gets more complicated. Beth thought this was positive movement considering their initial reaction. Wayne suggested that others get out to see Monty's proposed route as it is spectacular so they too can better advocate.

10. No Executive Session

Andrea moved to adjourn at 8:50, seconded by Monty; unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Castonguay