

Open Space Committee

Minutes for Meeting on December 2, 2008

Approved January 6, 2009

Attendees: Justine Kent-Uritam (Chairman), Paul Angelico, Sierra Bright, Henry Faulkner, Carol Lisbon (non-voting liaison from the Selectmen), Rich Oasis, Catherine White

Absent: Jane Brace, Boynton Glidden, Beedee Ladd, Amey Moot, Eamon O'Marah

Justine opened the meeting at the Town House at 7:30 p.m.

1. Committee Membership

Justine introduced new members Sierra Bright and Rich Oasis. She passed out a new membership list with contact information. She then went over the membership, noting that the committee was complete with eleven members. However, Beedee Ladd would like to resign. Therefore Justine asked for suggestions for a new member to replace her. It was noted that several members have not been sworn in, and therefore a quorum was not present. It was decided to continue with the meeting to share information.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 21, 2008 could not be approved due to a lack of quorum.

3. Committee Charge

Justine passed out the original charge of the committee when it was officially established at Town Meeting in 2001, and asked the members to review it.

4. Letter from the Selectmen Recommending a Change to the Committee's Charge

Justine passed out copies of the Selectmen's letter of May 15, 2008. The selectmen's letter is based on recommendations made by the Long Range Planning Committee in a letter to the Selectmen dated March 13, 2008. Carol Lisbon explained what the Selectmen were recommending, and there was discussion to clarify various points. There were two main points:

1. The Open Space Committee should coordinate the development of a comprehensive policy for the management of Town owned open space, as part of the process of revising the Open Space and Recreation Plan, now underway. The Con Comm would take the lead on the actual policy and

strategy, and the OSC would coordinate with other relevant Town boards and solicit public input.

2. The OSC, in consultation with the Con Comm, should develop a policy which ensures adequate public input when a significant change of use is contemplated on Town owned open space. It should come up with a definition of what is a significant change, and a procedure to be followed so that public input is solicited. Recent examples that might have benefited from more public involvement are the forestry management plan for Wylde Woods, the possible relocation of the Draper House to the town center, and possibility of clearing Caryl Park forest land for additional playing fields. It was noted that in some cases, these changes could be privately funded, and hence would not be subject to scrutiny at Town Meeting.

There was general agreement that these tasks were appropriate and feasible for the OSC. However, a vote on acceptance of the change in charge was not taken due to the lack of a quorum.

5. Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Justine discussed the status of this effort. Gino Carlucci has been hired and is proceeding with the update process. Justine suggested that Sections I through IV are largely boiler plate, and the updating of these sections would be mostly Gino's responsibility. The OSC needs to become involved in updating the remaining sections. She discussed the listing of properties desirable for conservation. She also handed out a listing from the Town Report of property exempted from taxation, and requested that members try to correlate this list with the one in the OSRP. Justine requested that members review and become familiar with the current OSRP in time for the January 6 meeting. She also went over the proposed schedule for completion of the update, given in the revised agenda for the meeting. It is now contemplated that the update will be completed around July 1, 2009.

6. TTOR Parking for Noanet Woodlands

Rich Oasis reported that, as a result of the Park and Recreation Commission's long standing request that TTOR relocate their parking lot for Noanet Woodlands away from Caryl Park, TTOR has agreed early in 2009 to move their shed to Powissett Street and change their brochure to indicate the change. This will force them to confront issue of where to locate their parking lot on Powissett Street. They have been working fairly hard on this for over a year. The two choices seem to be to have a legal battle with one abutter, or locate the parking lot at a much less advantageous site. Carol Lisbon commented that it is unlikely that a new parking lot will be built for some time, and that therefore the existing safety problem on Dedham Street will merely be moved to a worse location on Powissett Street, and hence exacerbated.

7. Town Report

Justine is willing to take on writing up the committee's activities for 2008.

8. Keystone Forest Program

Justine passed out a flyer from UMass Extension on a three day course in forestry management to be held at Harvard Forest in Petersham, MA on April 23-26, 2009.

9. Winter Walk

Justine requested that members think about locations and times for a winter walk guided by members of the OSC. Catherine volunteered to lead a walk.

Upcoming Open Space Committee meetings are scheduled for January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 15, and June 2.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Faulkner, Rotating Clerk