

DOVER OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 3, 2015

Attendance: Members: Amey Moot (Chair), Mark Bush, Henry Faulkner, Boynton Glidden, Justine Kent-Uritam, and Paul Wood. **Non Voting Liaisons:** Jerry Arnold (Long Range Planning) and Candace McCann (Board of Selectmen).

Absent: Eric Loeffler, Tara Nolan, and Dick Wood.

Guests: Valerie Lin and Alan Moss, Friends of the Dover Greenway.

Amey called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

I. Approval of the Minutes

Upon the motion of Mark, with a second by Henry, the Minutes of October 8, 2015 were unanimously approved.

III. Presentation by the Friends of the Dover Greenway (the "Friends")

Alan Moss and Valerie Lin discussed the advantages of transforming the 3.7 mile railroad bed in town into a recreational trail. The trail would go from the railroad bridge on the Dover side of the Charles River to the Medfield Town line near Hunt Drive. At present, there are no plans to reconstruct the decaying railroad bridge from Needham to Dover so this recreational trail would be in Dover only. There are 70+ towns in Massachusetts with recreational trails like this. The Dover trail is currently owned by the MBTA that could lease it to the town of Dover for \$1 per year for 99 years. The width of the railroad right of way varies, ranging from 40' to 60' in places. The width of the recreational trail would be 10'-12' wide. The benefits of the trail would be to provide a place where walkers, joggers, parents with children in strollers, wheelchair users, and recreational bicyclists could use the path without dealing with automobile traffic. This kind of trail is especially needed in Dover that has very few sidewalks. The trail would link various neighborhoods in Dover and would foster a sense of community among residents and might make Dover more attractive as a place to live. A stone dust trail would also be relatively "tick free."

Certain concerns and issues were also addressed, specifically, as follow:

(1) Possible environmental issues associated with the past use of the trail by trains. Based on the experiences of other rail trails in Massachusetts, the Friends think that the environmental risks are minimal, centering mainly on the top few inches of soil underneath the tracks. As an abundance of caution, however, the town could buy environmental insurance prior to signing the lease and could do further soil testing thereafter.

(2) Costs: The Friends report that the typical initial capital costs to construct a stone dust trail are about \$150k per mile. These initial costs refer to the costs of engineering, environmental studies, and the labor and materials costs associated with the removal of the ties and rails and the installation of stone dust. Based on her experience with the Upper Charles Trail in Holliston (that has been promoted by the Upper Charles Conservation Land Trust with which Justine is associated), Justine thought that the costs would be more than this.

**DOVER OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 3, 2015**

As far as maintenance is concerned, the Friends believe that volunteers will do most of the work for an annual fee of less than \$5,000 per mile or about \$20,000/year. Again, based on her experience, Justine thinks that volunteers will soon weary of the tasks and that town personnel will eventually take over the main tasks of tree work and the removal of poison ivy along the tracks.

(3) Crime: Typically, people using recreational trails do not increase crime rates in towns. This fact is especially true with the advent of cell phones that enable users to report to local the local police force the few incidents that they do see.

(4) Road/Racing bikes: Assuming that the Dover recreational trail will be composed of stone dust (and not asphalt), speeding racing bike users would not be attracted to the trail. Justine added that any Dover Town Meeting vote should mandate that only stone dust be used on the trail.

(5) Dogs/Horses: The town will have to decide whether or not owners with dogs and/or horses will be allowed on the trail. Justine noted that Dover has a large percentage of residents with dogs and urged the Friends to permit dogs on leashes as is the case with the Upper Charles Trail in Holliston. She also noted that the Dover Town Meeting would also probably want to enact legislation so that fines could be issued to dog owners who do not keep their pets on leashes (given the fact that Dover does not have a town wide leash law).

(6) Trespassing on private land: Jerry noted that people already trespass on private property (many coming out of Wylde Woods) and that this situation will probably increase with the creation of a recreational trail. Jerry said that increased signage might mitigate this potential problem. The Friends noted that there are few abutters to the trail (approximately 10+ houses from Springdale Avenue to Hunt Drive). Justine noted that, again, the Dover Town Meeting could legislate fines for trespassing on private property. Regarding the 30+residences from Centre Street to the Dover Town Garage, the Friends may not advocate creating a trail along this section of town.

(7) Parking: The Friends minimized the possibility that many non-Dover residents would use the Dover recreational trail, given the fact that the trail is linear (it does not go in a circle anywhere) and given the fact that it is only 3.7 miles long. Justine noted that the Upper Charles Trail in Holliston and Milford is 14 miles long and attracts both residents and non-residents. She urged the town to specify designated parking locations such as the parking lot at the Dover Town Garage and at Channing Pond, for example. If these parking spots were to become overburdened with cars, then parking restrictions might have to be imposed some time in the future.

**DOVER OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 3, 2015**

IV. Discussion about New Members

Given the recent passing of Barbara Roth-Schechter, there was an initial discussion as to how many openings there are now on the Open Space Committee and for what length of term. Candace and Justine came to different conclusions and agreed to have this matter further researched.

V. Updates

A. Open Space Committee

(1) Public Walks: The Dover Land Conservation Trust (DLCT) held a Field Day on Oct. 17 that was followed by its annual meeting atop Pegan Hill on Oct. 25. Justine walked the Upper Charles Trail with Dover residents on Nov. 1. There will be a Tri-Town Walk (Westwood, Dover, and Medfield) sponsored by Hale and TTOR on Nov. 7. The Norfolk Hunt will hold an event atop Pegan Hill on Nov. 11.

(2) Land Acquisitions: The Centre Street gift to the DLCT is progressing. DLCT, with the help of TTOR, acquired the former Healer land on Pegan Hill on Oct. 14. Funds to acquire the former Mumford property in South Natick must now be authorized by the Natick Town Meeting Members at a Special Town Meeting to be held on December 1.

B. Conservation Commission: Jerry is creating a summary of all the work that he has done at Wylde Woods over the past year and will present it soon to the ConCom.

C. Springdale Study Committee: Paul McManus gave useful advice to the group that will be bringing its recommendations for the future use of 46 Springdale Avenue soon.

D. Planning Board: Signage rules and special permit by-laws are being reworked per Henry.

E. Board of Health, Parks and Rec, Board of Selectmen: No updates.

Amey adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Justine Kent-Uritam