

Open Space Committee

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Minutes

- I. Attendance and Approval of Minutes: Called to order 5:05pm. Present were Lucy Abisalih, Sue Simmons, Mary Ann Glennon, Jennifer Mansfield, and Sandy Venner. Guests: Martin Hanlon and Vanessa Hall Johnson. Motion made, seconded and voted to approve the minutes for May 24, 2022.
- II. Conservation Restriction (CR) for Town Forest: Vanessa, from Greenbelt, explained that a CR is a tool to preserve land without a transfer of ownership that can be used to conserve farmland, wetlands and forests. The entity holding the CR has the obligation to monitor the restriction forever. CRs can be held by municipalities through Conservation Commissions, the state, or private nonprofits. Greenbelt typically requests a donation of \$10,000 if it assumes a CR. The committee also discussed the legal explanation Vanessa had provided stating that land protected under MGL Ch 97 can not be altered without a 2/3 vote of both the municipality and the Legislature. The committee has not been able to determine if Ch 97 applies to the Town Forest and may need assistance of Town Counsel. Review of deeds for the land acquired for the Town Forest do not have a stated purpose of conservation. Question if Town Meeting has voted to put in the land under "care, custody and control of the Con Com under Article 97." To comply with the Ch 97 or for a CR(?), the former landfill would need to be a separate parcel; use of motorized vehicles would need to be regulated; and the playing fields designated as land for active recreational use.
- III. Updates and Next Steps for Priority Recommendations in Open Space Plan: Lucy presented a draft handout for the BOS with the status of the five priority goals the committee has been discussing and the Committee's recommendations for action. It was decided to first draw the attention of the BOS to the three goals noted below. OSC will further research conserving the Town Forest and trail use by ATVs before bringing these to the Board. Members were asked to review and comment on the draft.
- a. Access to and Improvement of McLaren Trail - Lucy has not heard from Bill Hoyt regarding his assessment of the extend and estimated cost of work to be done. She will follow up with him.
 - b. Merrimack River access at Locust St. – Sandy learned for Fire Chief Fisher he has spoken to another nearby neighbor to the landing who would not like to see public access encouraged. The Chief plans to speak to an additional person. OSC decided to bring the matter before the BOS to see where they stand.
 - c. Emery St. and Community Gardens – Lucy reported that the Disabilities Commission is very interested in raised beds for gardening at Emery St. OSC will discuss with the BOS a process to create a larger plan for Carriagetown Park that includes gardens.

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- IV. Bench by Beaver Pond at Cobblers Brook in Town Forest: Sue reported the bench was approved by the Con Com and BOS and will be installed without removal of trees.
- V. Report on Spring Trail Walk and Trail Status and Updates: Attendance was low for walk, but a wildlife photographer participated. Sue will seek Brian's recommendation for removal of down trees on the trails.
- VI. Participation in Old Home Days: Although there was not much public participation in past years, OSC will look into having a table again. Dawn will be asked to serve a point person and submit the form to OHD Committee. Jennifer will get trail tracking handout from Greenbelt. Need to organize volunteers for setup and time shifts.
- VII. FY' 22 Expenditures: Remaining funds were used for printing trail maps, paint for marking trails, and IT charge of \$87.50 from the Town.
- VIII. Correspondence - None
- IX. Next meeting will be Sept. 13th at 5pm unless there is a need to meet sooner. Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Sandra Venner

July 25, 2022