

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting – February 13, 2018 Minutes

Time: 7:00 – 9:15 PM Location: Town Hall First Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Tania Lillak, Chair; Jim Olivetti, Clerk; Richard Smith, Sara Hepburn, Sarah Koch, Angela Ippolito, Planning Board Chair; Pete Kane, Director of Community Development; Gino Cresta, Jr., DPW Director (guest)

Members Absent: Toni Bandrowicz, Vice Chair; Danielle Strauss, Recreation Director; Patrick Jones, Selectman Liaison.

The minutes of the January 9, 2018 meeting were approved.

The meeting began with a presentation by two companies of their proposals to provide organic turf care for Swampscott's public green spaces. The proposals from Earth Landscape of Salem and Pure Solutions located in Weston were developed in response to a request for information to establish organic maintenance of a 78,000 sq. ft. lawn area at Linscott Park.

Both presentations involved treating and improving the underlying soil using organic materials, not feeding the grass synthetic chemicals and pesticides. Both companies have not as yet had towns as customers -- only residential clients for their organic services. They felt that budgetary issues have kept towns from contracting for organic turf care, as, in the short term, it is more expensive than traditional synthetic applications. Close coordination with the town's DPW would be necessary to provide the watering and mowing approaches needed for successful organic management.

Action Item: Sarah will prepare a summary sheet comparing the two proposals and forward this synopsis to Gino Cresta for his use in moving the pilot project forward.

Review of previous meeting's action items

- **Letter to DPW on town forest.** Gino Cresta stated that he was planning to have DPW begin work on both the Eisman's Beach path improvement and the access to Harold King Forest in the next several weeks in response to the Committee's letters to him. He asked if the Committee felt a hand rail needed to be installed at the steps created at the Forest entrance. Richard Smith suggested that such a hand rail requirement would apply to entrances to buildings, not to a woodland path access point.

AGENDA ITEMS

Airtable spreadsheet update:

Sara Hepburn demonstrated how the Airtable software will be used to edit and display the OS&RP goals and objectives. Allowing for Committee member access to the spreadsheet was discussed. Pete Kane noted that nothing should be deleted from the objectives, as they are integral to the original plan as approved by the state. Revisions to the objectives should be made in the next iteration of the plan. Updates should be generated from the meeting minutes. It was decided that Committee members will receive read only access to the spreadsheet.

Action Item: Sara will provide Committee members read-only access to the objectives spreadsheet. She will act as administrator and make all changes and updates to the spreadsheet as needed.

Mitigation/impact fees:

It was the sense of the Committee that it should follow the progress of the Massachusetts legislature as it develops a comprehensive statewide zoning reform bill, rather than make an effort to develop a local bylaw relating to development impact fees. Pete Kane said that in his roll with the MAPC, he would be apprised of legislative progress on zoning reform and will pass on information to the Committee.

Friends of Swampscott Conservation Land:

The February 8th meeting was a success, with 20 or so residents attending. Toni Bandrowicz led the meeting that included an overview by Bob French of the goals and organizational structure of the Marblehead Conservancy. Tania and Jim attended from the Committee along with Toni.

Foster Pond and Aggregate property update:

Pete confirmed that he had included the acquisition of the land next to Foster Pond and behind Windsor Park in his five-year capital planning and had presented the request to the Capital Improvement Committee.

Street trees and natural gas leaks:

Jim recommended the Committee consult a web site operated by the Home Energy Efficiency Team www.heetma.org to learn more about gas leaks and street trees. As of December 2016, there were 72 unrepaired leaks reported in Swampscott. Data for December 2017 will be available on the web site in April. The towns of Brookline, Hingham, Milton, Nahant and Saugus all have pending legal actions against National Grid involving damage to city trees from gas leaks.

Community Garden update: Sarah Koch said the development of a community garden for Swampscott is moving forward. There is a plan to pilot a raised bed garden on the First Church property. Establishing a 501 c3 organization would give the effort autonomy from the town administrative structure and would allow for private fund raising.

Sarah asked Gino if the town could provide water and a place to store gardening tools. Gino said he thought something could be worked out.

Committee/Department update – Historical

Richard said there is concern about developers demolishing the White Court main building, that has U.S. presidential historical ties. There was some discussion among Committee members about this issue. Hope was expressed that some architectural elements, ie, doors, fireplaces, murals, etc. could be incorporated into the replacement structure or saved elsewhere. There could be deed restrictions put in place to preserve these elements. Angela Ipolito encouraged the Historical Commission to be proactive and define its preservation goals clearly.

Task Force update – Little's Point and White Court sale

The plan for the development of senior housing at White Court is proceeding. Angela indicated that the Committee can attend meetings and comment on the site plan review when it comes before the Planning Board. After that the development proposal also must come before the Zoning Board where additional input from the Committee on open space and preservation can be received.

Pete indicated that the developer continues to be favorably disposed to establishing a public easement to allow access to an ocean viewshed along the property line abutting Blythswood.

Task Force update – Tree Advisory:

Jim reported that the Task Force is preparing a recommendation to DPW as to what tree species to choose for three street trees to be planted in front of Hawthorne by the Sea.

The next OS&RPC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 13, 2018.