

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting – December 12, 2017 Minutes

Time: 7:05 – 8:40 PM Location: Town Hall First Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Tania Lillak, Chair; Toni Bandrowicz, Vice Chair; Jim Olivetti, Clerk; Richard Smith, Sara Hepburn, Angela Ippolito, Planning Board Chair; Pete Kane, Director of Community Development;

Members Absent: Sarah Koch, Danielle Strauss, Recreation Director; Patrick Jones, Selectman Liaison.

The minutes of the November 28, 2017 meeting were approved.

Tania noted that she had officially forwarded new member Sarah Koch's name to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

Review of previous meeting's action items

- Harold King Forest: Instead of posting on SeeClickFix a request for DPW work at Harold King Forest, it was decided to prepare a letter on the issues.

Action Item: Jim will draft a letter and circulate for comment on the need to improve the parking lot entrance and to remove refuse materials dumped further into the Forest. The goal is to have the work done before Memorial Day, to prepare for the celebration of the completed Eagle Scout project.

Action Item: Toni will investigate what concerns may exist for doing work on the entrance which may be in the wetlands buffer zone, and whether or not an RDA would be triggered by such modifications to the entrance.

- Bioblitz project: No work has been done as yet to identify topics from the Open Space Plan that could be addressed by high school students using the iNaturalist app.
- Path to Eisman's Beach: Tania reported that she signed and sent letter requesting path improvements to Gino Cresta. The letter, dated December 5, has been posted to the Committee's web page.

AGENDA ITEMS

Reorganization ideas for Open Space Plan objectives spreadsheet:

Jim stated he felt the need to have the objectives spreadsheet reorganized so that the Committee can more efficiently determine the status of remaining goals. He noted that the Plan is more than halfway through its 2013-2020 cycle, and it will not be long before a Plan revision will be needed. Sara Hepburn volunteered to redeploy the spreadsheet on the Airtable collaboration platform which Pete is using to manage some town projects. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Sarah for taking on this task.

Action Item: Sarah will keep the Committee informed of her progress in coming months.

"In lieu of" fees for 40B and open space:

In reply to past member Sarah Pruett's concern about the very low fee paid by the developer of the former middle school property to circumvent inclusion of low income housing, Pete indicated that this was a one-time fee determination, specific to the Greenwood Ave. site. Pete noted that to encourage creation and development of parks and open space, some towns have included "mitigation fees" (or impact fees) in their bylaws to support such improvements. Imposition of such a fee, to be paid by

developers, would support the *Open Space & Recreation Plan* objective #48 of incorporating open space goals into land use planning and zoning.

Action item: Pete will reach out to other planners to identify what other communities have in place.

Organic Land Management plan:

The Committee appears to be at an impasse on moving forward to establish organic land management for public green spaces in town. Initial enthusiasm created by the public meeting on organic practices has diminished. Angela suggested the Health Department may have a key role to play here. Toni wondered if contractors could be identified to take on the work, rather than adding full time DPW positions, or if the existing contractor who provides mowing would be able to perform the organic management functions. Pete cautioned that the effort needs to make financial sense. Jim added that hidden costs of using artificial pesticides etc. are often overlooked and should be incorporated in such financial assessments. It was agreed that obtaining cost comparisons between traditional and organic management of green space is crucial to arguing for organic land management.

Action Item: Tania will work with Sarah Koch to re-energize this effort.

Blythswood easement:

Members of the Committee received an email from Gino providing an estimate of cost to construct a wooden post fence, with 8-foot separation and a thick rope connecting each post to demark the boundary of the ten foot wide path at Blythswood and to put down a dense grade material for the path surface. He also provided an estimate for the cost of a survey if one was needed. There is still some uncertainty whether or not a survey exists in addition to the map that is included in the conservation easement agreement.

Action Item: Angela and Pete will research the question of the survey's existence and report back.

Friends of Swampscott Conservation Land:

Plans for the first meeting of the Friends group are underway. It was suggested that Bob French of the Marblehead Conservancy and Dan Small, Lynn Woods Ranger, may be available to speak. Pete offered to do a press release on the meeting once the specifics are settled on. It was suggested that the Panera meeting room in Vinnin Square would be a good place to meet.

Action Item: Toni will establish a date for the meeting and report back on progress at January OSC meeting.

Foster Pond and Aggregate property:

Sean Fitzgerald and Gino have not responded to Toni's request for a meeting to discuss negotiations with Aggregate that could include transfer of properties abutting Foster Pond to the town. Pete said that he has included the property behind Windsor Park in the Capital Planning spreadsheet. There would still be time to include parcels abutting Foster Pond in the CIP spreadsheet as well.

Action Item: Pete and Toni will work together to identify Aggregate holdings abutting Foster Pond, including parcel with existing dock.

Community Garden update: The application to the Swampscott Cultural Council for grant money to support the development of the garden was not funded by the Council.

Historical update: Angela says preservation plans are needed for the Fish House and Train Station. Richard commented that it may not be possible to create proper plans using volunteer effort.

Committee/Department update – Rail Trail:

Pete announced that the rail trail surveys, both aerial and ground, are completed. Sara Hepburn announced the next meeting of the Rail Trail Design and Advisory Committee to be held on December 18th.

Committee/Department update – Tree Advisory Task Force:

Tania reported that Verena Karsten is planning for a January meeting of the Task Force.

Concluding remarks from the Chair:

To summarize the Committee's activities undertaken in 2017, Tania listed objectives from the *Open Space & Recreation Plan* that have been met, either through Committee efforts or in conjunction with other volunteer groups and town departments.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday January 9, 2018.