

WEARE OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 24, 2008
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In attendance were: John Ciampi (secretary), Steve Najjar (chair OSC), Pat Myers, George Malette, Andy Fulton (chair Weare Conservation Commission), and Andrea Alderman (vice-chair OSC).

Minutes of previous meeting – The minutes of 5-27-08 were reviewed by committee members. There being no disparities, Andrea made motion to accept the minutes as written, and John 2nd. All voted in favor and the motion carries.

Hawkes/Wilson Update – Marsha Beecy is waiting for the timber appraisal. Steve noted that because Rod Wilson wants to implement the “forever wild” designation on his property, the value of the easement gets boosted up. Steve explained this “forever wild” concept may not be desirable to the OSC. If possible, Steve would like to hammer out the final details at the next Open Space meeting. Shawn Hawkes, on the other hand, is content with a standard easement. Marsha plans to contact Jeremy of Meadowsend Forestry Services, to get a fix on where they are with the timber appraisal. Shawn called Steve informing him that the bank may consider a release on the 30 acre parcel, but is not completely sure at this point in time, and is still going through foreclosure. Steve noted that everything at this point hinges on the appraisal. The date of the Purchase and Sales Agreement is scheduled for September. Steve asked if this land contact should be discussed at the next Conservation Commission meeting to hammer out the easement language, Andy responded he doesn’t see why not. However, Steve wondered if a separate meeting would be needed to iron out every detail.

Steve repeated his opposition to Rod’s “no cut” request since it would reduce the renewable resource value of the property. Steve theorized Rod maintains his “forever wild” stance because he has seen a lot of blotched logging practices. Steve noted a public hearing is still needed in which 10 business days are required for posting, and at some point the OSC will need to meet with the BOS since any land purchases involve some degree of liability. Steve wondered if it would be better to have a joint BOS/public hearing which would include a BOS vote. Steve explained the main tie-up now is waiting for the appraisal to come in. Also, a meeting with the PLC (Piscataquog Land Conservancy) is in order. The public hearing will more than likely happen in August during the Conservation Commission meeting. Additionally, once the appraisal comes in, a title search needs to be scheduled by the PLC, the proposed easement holder. Some discussion centered on the value of the Conservation Fund, to which Steve reminded the members of the \$20,000.00 pledged to the PLC for the Abijah Bridge dam project. Steve also mentioned it would be beneficial to contact the Mildred Hall Advisory Committee concerning the Wilson/Hawkes land deal. And at the same time, Steve wondered if the Russell Foundation will contribute to this project and how much.

Land Contact List – The Land Contact List was composed by Judy Rogers, of the land assessor’s office.

Mike McKeivitt: Steve asked John about his status, to which he replied he will try to contact him for an update on his intentions. Mike hasn’t returned any call so far, and he won’t need a “we’re broke” letter because he hasn’t been actively engaged in negotiations.

Silvia Pope: Steve will e-mail her a letter since she travels frequently.

Dot O’Neil: Need to acquire her mailing address.

Michelle Gagnon: She doesn't need a letter because her land is mostly wet, so the chances of massive development on her property are minimal.

Pinard: He needs a letter sent out to him.

Shadduck: He is in process of selling his property, but so far hasn't sold, according to Pat. She suggested sending him a letter in case he has a change of heart or if his property doesn't sell.

Hawkes/Wilson: Obviously they don't need a letter.

Alma Smidt: She should receive a letter since she is the actual owner of the property rather than Ray Banks.

Bill Trower: Steve had some contact with him in the past but to date hasn't gotten very far with negotiations.

Charles McClain: Located on Rt. 114, and is in a similar situation as the Trower contact. Pat suggested both these contacts receive a letter because (a) it would inform them of the OSC's lack of funds, and (b) would leave the door open for future negotiations.

Steve recommended not sending out any "we're broke" letters until after the appraisals come in to be sure the OSC is actually financially exhausted.

Open Space Plan - Andrea indicated she will try and have the Open Space Plan formatted into Acrobat Pro, and that's where she is with it now. She noted SNHPC claimed they never had a copy of the Plan, so their assistance in this project is negligible. Steve pointed out the manner the Plan is saved on the internet does not recognize text, even with Acrobat Pro. A scanner that recognizes text may work, but one would still need to go back and correct the images, and Andrea surmised the OSP is too lengthy to retype. At this juncture in the meeting, several separate discussions happened at once, revolving around the nuts and bolts of the formatting process, storage of information, and general conference on this issue. George stated this Plan is a significant document because it can be used as a reference tool during implementation of the Master Plan. Andrea remarked that users of the Plan can still find this document useful, despite imaging flaws. Pat wondered if it might be easier to scan pages from the OSP, to which Steve replied that would depend on how much time one is willing to spend on that endeavor. Pat commented there are many items in the Plan that might need correction, but do not pertain to the Natural Resource Inventory.

George stated he would be willing to contact Dave Preseau (sp), a contact person for the plan, and ask him if he would reformat the document into Word. Pat commented the Town is incumbent upon keeping the Plan up to date as is stipulated, but there must be some way of doing it. Its last update was 2002. Pat further commented there needs to be some clarification of the definition of "Open Space" because the manner it is addressed in the Plan follows a wandering pattern which confuse the true goals and actions of the Plan, probably she continued, because there were many points of view being expressed at the same time. George called attention to the town of Candia which has one of the better OSPs as it was written more recently and could possibly be used as a reference. George noted that any change in the Plan would have to be presented and discussed in a public forum, and additionally would need Planning Board approval. He also commented that all local committees should have a voice in determining which questions go out to the public and how they are worded, lest the final document becomes "cooked" and unbalanced. Pat offered to have the Plan scanned at her employment, and George extended an offer to contact SNHPC for some ideas. Andrea cautioned that even if scanned, it won't be properly translated since the characters will "be all over the place" even if Acrobat Pro were used. George remarked that anyone can still read the document as it exists and make changes and or comments. And, he added, any changes made to the Master Plan needs to be filed with the Town Clerk and the OSP (Office of State Planning) since the OSC is linked to the Master Plan. Steve suggested using the course filter analysis and overlay to determine what is important. Pat's recapitulation of this discussion is to keep the current layout of the Plan but tweaking the

substance making it more logical and eliminating the “blubber”. George’s assessment is to incorporate all prevailing resources, including the Natural Resource Inventory into the Plan, in order to make it more consistent and comprehensive. Andy summarized breaking the Plan into variable components, i.e., identifying certain areas specifically important such as agriculture, lands qualified for a trail system, wildlife habitat, recreation, etc. so there can be some basis for a general layout. However, Andy cautioned, this method can be problematic because we can only make decisions on what we own. George commented the OSC *does* hold the right to determine how a section of town can be designated if deemed to harbor attributes important enough. He maintained once certain goals are embraced the next logical step would be to send it to the voters for final approval via warrant article. Steve’s compendium is looking at key areas to protect rather than from a regulatory perspective, which could be the source of all the “fluff”, to which George countered there has to be some sort of zoning references in the Master Plan for any discussion to have legal clout. Andrea wondered how the transfer of development rights will eventually play out, to which George added that’s why the OSP is important and adjustments to it are needed.

Natural Resource Inventory – Steve asked Andrea the status of the NRI, and she responded all the maps are completed but are still waiting for the co- occurrences to be filled out. The plans are to finish up by summer’s end or early fall.

Maps – A general discussion was engaged focusing on the condition and accuracy of the currently possessed maps of town lands. George noted there should be at least two copies of all maps, one copy filed with the Town clerk for protection, and another with Naomi.

Adjournment – John made motion to adjourn, and George 2nd. All voted in favor and the motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Ciampi
Recording Secretary

cc: Town Clerk
Files
Merry Rice
BOS