

**Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts**

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Office: 781.340.5012

Fax: 781.335.8184

TTY: 781.331.5124

Robert L. Hedlund
Mayor

75 Middle Street
Weymouth, MA 02189



MINUTES

Open Space Committee
January 9th, 2019, 7:00 pm
Weymouth Town Hall
Kelly Room
75 Middle Street, 2nd Floor
Weymouth, MA 02189

Members Present: Andrew Hultin

Dave Henley

Kathy Swain

Kate Marshall

Karen Graham

Member Absent: Cate Parsley, Joe Haddock

Andrew informed the committee that Joe was traveling and could not make the meeting and Cate could no longer be able to commit the time to be involved with the committee

1. Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve Dave- Second Karen – Discussion none- Unanimous

2. Open Space and Recreation Plan Update – The town has hired the Horsley Witten Group to oversee the update of the plan. They have most recently worked with the town of Marshfield. Andrew would like to get the committee feedback to Horsley Witten with regards to the current plan. Kathy asked Dave if he had the opportunity to review the Open Space Plan and to comment on. Dave said he has taken the time to look at other plans of other towns and how they fit. Kathy mentioned one plan has wildlife corridors in the plan. Dave said that Lexington had Wildlife corridors. Dave mentioned that Bedford had a bicycle and pedestrian plan. They had a map with the main corridors for transportation and they went to the residents and asked questions about what and where you like or do not like walking/riding in the town of Bedford. He stated that this is difficult for Weymouth because the town is built out. However at least when they are going to repave a street or improve the sidewalks, they can refer to comments that have been by citizens regarding pedestrians and bikes. He mentioned that in Bedford they have connected subdivisions and streets with paths. He felt when thinking about Gagnon park you could connect different neighborhoods also the same thing could happen with the Torrey Bird Sanctuary. Andrew said that when they met with the consultant group they did question about how people did access these open space areas. Dave also mentioned that in the Bedford plan they identify which roads have one sidewalk and which have two, identifying which are easier to walk. Andrew suggested that we put some of this in writing so Andrew could submit. Dave also mentioned in the Open Space plan he reviewed that NSTAR encourages people to use

their easements. He stated that NSTAR feels that if these tracts of lands are used by the public there will be less vandalism. He also stated that NSTAR manages the vegetation for access to these areas. He said when you think about the current discussion going on about Pond Meadow and the dog park that maybe under these powerlines would be an ideal space for a dog park. Kathy questioned how we ask about allowing power company easements to be used for open space and recreation. Dave also mentioned the Quabbin Reservoir plan the DCR allows walking, fishing, boating. He wondered if any of that could happen at the Weymouth Reservoir between Negus Park and Gifford Park. Andrew said he has a little bit of an update about that which he will present later. Andrew asked if there was any more feed back on the current plan. Kathy had submitted a written copy of some thoughts and questions about the current plan. Kathy stated that in reviewing the current plan the biggest thing she took out of it was the number of times she saw the words park maintenance. She stated that she still does not see maintenance. She sees building and development. She feels that there is no plan. There is no plan in place for these beautiful areas we created as far as maintaining the landscape. She did some research in the care and maintenance of new trees. There are set plans for how they are watered, fertilized, pruned in the first three years. She stated that the town plants a tree and walks away, and these trees are expensive. She looked at Fogg Library the other day and the Oak tree needs to be pruned. The trees that have been planted in the landing are a mess. She stated that the arborist has always come to remove a tree but where is the plan to care for the trees; what is the vision? Is there one? It seems to her, the town hires outside landscapers to come in and clean these areas up. She noticed up at the Fogg Library; newly planted trees had been mounded with mulch, something that is not supposed to be done. She questioned as to why we cannot be proactive rather than reactive? When the town is presented the landscape plans for development there is no one who can really evaluate these plans. She questioned whether the town should have a landscape architects to review these plans. Karen commented that at Osprey Overlook they had someone come in and do work, and they just cleared everything out. She stated you need a plan and you need someone who knows what the rules are. Karen also stated that Mayor Madden had trees planted all along Pleasant St. and all of those are dead today. Andrew said they have spoken to DPW and he feels that maintenance will be a part of the updated plan. Kathy stated there should be a written plan for all the open spaces in the town. Andrew stated there is a plan for some of the newly renovated parks in town. Karen stated it needs to more than just the ballfields and the soccer fields. Kathy stated you cannot do the maintenance that is needed with one arborist and a helper. Kate Marshall mentioned the plantings around the dog shelter at Osprey Overlook need to be maintained. Kathy stated that the town needs to hire a Park Ranger like at Pond Meadow and have his own group of people to get the work done.

Another area of the plan that Kathy commented on was Southfield. She questioned what is happening there regarding the Open Space Plan that was developed years ago. Karen asked if Andrew had investigated what is happening with the Open Space Plan and the development of the air base. Andrew commented that with the current status of the base development they are not going to be able to delve into it right now. Andrew stated there is plan. Kate Marshall stated there are 4 maps on the Union Point website. Andrew said they partnered with Wildlands Trust and will we be working with them as far as implementing their trails plan. Kate Marshall said the plan is outdated. Kathy also stated that Weston Park needs to be evaluated in the update. Kathy asked if the new consultants plan to update the demographic data and needs analysis? Kathy commented that the plan stated a need for off season senior programming, open space recreational facilities for middle aged people. Did we meet that goal? Andrew stated that it is ongoing. The Back River trails and the trails around Legion and Lovell are providing a ton of amenities in that direction. The senior center has a new walking trail. Kathy asked where the

Environmental Justice area is and are their grants available for that area. Kate stated that is was over near Shaws. Kathy asked about the MDC pool and the hours of operation? She also asked about the water part of the plan. How much the plan states we are drawing and what we are drawing. She also commented on the statement in the plan that said, "water supply has little bearing on open space and recreation in the town." Kathy asked if the preservation of wildlife is not directly affected by their access to water. Dave also stated that he feels Great Pond should be opened to the citizens of Weymouth. In the current plan it is mentioned that it should be opened to the public.

Kathy asked how involved this committee will be in the process of updating the Open Space Plan. Andrew said that there is a steering committee with the town departments involved but we would be involved at some level. Kate stated that when the Master Plan was done it involved public meetings with the citizens. The new method will be using more technology to reach out. The new way is called a meeting in a box. Dave said in Lexington they put questionnaires on the website and at Flu Clinics. Karen stated people are getting used to watching things on television rather than coming out to meetings.

Andrew said he would like to keep this group involved possible by forming sub-committees to help with the direction of the group and help find new members.

3. The CPC voted in favor of funding the town's match; that will move to town council for approval. The town also got a \$5,000.00 donation from Riverway Plaza. The Bradford Torrey Project and the Woodbine Property are on track. Andrew proposed in marking trail that we use colors; most trails are loops. Andrew stated that maybe the committee could be involved in marking the trails. Andrew is trying to finalize maps. Andrew presented the trailhead logo that he developed with the help of Karen.

4. Andrew met with the mayor to go over some of these projects and what are the next steps. The town is addressing the biggest and most open spaces in town and identifying trails and marking them out. Cavern Rock is one of those area. There already is parking access for Cavern Rock off Westminster Road.

House Rock and Brad Hawes Park are other open space areas that have parking and would not involve much to identify and mark trails. Andrew discussed with the mayor of the possibility of a trail from Negus Park and Gifford Park. The mayor supported the idea. Karen noted there is currently a no trespassing sign there. Kathy suggested they notify the abutters and Andrew stated he always notifies the abutters. Dave asked if you could apply for a grant for the Cavern Rock Area since it is in an Environmental Justice area. Andrew said you could, but it really is not needed because there is not a lot involved to open the area up to the public.

Karen stated that the area up at Great Pond has been used for years by dirt bikes. Kathy asked if there is a way to go around the pond. Karen said that there are areas that are too wet to have a loop. Kathy asked if you could build a boardwalk. Andrew stated that boardwalks are costly and involve building in wetlands which can present problems. Dave mentioned there is an area in Norwell, Norris Park that has boardwalks. Andrew said there is another area in Norwell that has boardwalks around a pond. Andrew said the town is still interested in keeping most of this area protected at this time.

A few other projects the town is looking at, the Robert Hoffman Park near Jackson Square, a small spit of land across from the gazebo. There is a small parcel on Commercial St.. Karen mentioned a small parcel off Century Road, Sara Brassil Park. Andrew wants to do something with the landing canoe launch.

5. Mass Land Conference is March 23rd. Andrew is hoping to bring some committees members with him. Andrew is going to try for funding to cover the cost of us attending. Andrew mentioned to the mayor that the committee having some involvement in the town clean up day. The clean up date is usually the first or second week in April. Andrew thought maybe the open space committee could do a promo with WETC. Dave thought as we are out looking at places, we should be identifying area that need to be cleaned up.

Kate Marshall said that possible during the day if committees' members are around maybe they could be involved if something comes that would be of interest to the committee.

Kathy mentioned that in the plan they talk about a Mill River Walk. Kathy wondered if that could ever happen? Dave asked about the Swamp River behind Ralph Talbot school. Andrew thought maybe this is an area we could put up an informational panel. Karen thought the panel would make people feel safer.


Kathy asked if we could include the Open Space area at the Wildlife Center in the updated plan. Andrew said there is a parcel of land the town owns off Forest St, on Wampum St. also.

6. Community Comment- No Comment

7. Next meeting- February 13th 2019, Kelly Room

8. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn, second by Dave, voted unanimously

Approved:



Andrew Hultin, Chair

Date 02/13/2019