

West Newbury Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 19, 2019
Second-floor Meeting Room, Town Office Building

Present: Jessica Azenaro, Don Bourquard, Brad Buschur, Jean Lambert, Wendy Reed, Patricia Reeser, Marley Switzer, scribe
Absent: Dan Carlat, John Dodge
Guest: Nancy Pau, candidate for Associate Member

The posted start time for this meeting was 7:30 p.m. It was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

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OSC membership: Dan Carlat has declined to be reappointed for another term as an associate member. Nancy Pau has expressed an interest in the vacancy and attended the meeting to learn more about the OSC. Carol Decker also has applied for associate membership. Patricia said she and Don have been reappointed by Selectmen for another term. She announced that John Dodge will replace her as OSC chairperson, and Jessica Azenaro will be the committee secretary.

The OSC discussed the value of bringing diverse expertise to the committee as it embarks on an ambitious Action Plan. Currently, the committee is comprised of 7 full members with 3-year terms and 2 associate members with 1-year terms. On Don's motion, seconded by Patricia, the committee unanimously voted to create an article for the fall Town Meeting warrant that would modify the bylaw, authorizing up to 4 associate members. The BOS will be informed of the rationale and the committee's intention to bring the matter to TM.

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Ocean Meadow: Patricia followed up on a query by an Ocean Meadow resident about why the development's trail doesn't extend to Route 113. At the root of the problem is an historical disagreement between several landowners and ECTA. She said the regional trail organization will have to come up with a relocation solution for the recorded easement crossing property owned by the Kelly and Lord families. Don said he drew up the original easement plan and will become more familiar with the access issues. Patricia said the Kelly easement has an arbitration clause.

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ECTA: The primarily equine-oriented organization is responsible for management of trails on its properties and easements in town. The organization carries insurance and employs professional trail maintenance work. Patricia said the DPW will have to clear some of the Red Trail in Riverbend so ECTA can determine how best to restore the trail. The ConCom must be notified of the need to relocate the steep, rutted area. The alternative location for the new trail section is a large field behind Page School. It will be necessary to draw up a site plan after walking the field and placing flags. Don volunteered to create that plan. Patricia will examine the lease to determine if the school has jurisdiction of the field.

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Trail accessibility: A high priority goal of the 2019 OSRP Action Plan is creating access to open space in town for those with limited ability. The committee has discussed two existing trails that could be made more accessible without major work: along Mill Pond and off Coffin Street into Riverbend. Patricia said she would explore the use of local CPA funding for engineering costs. The Federal Park Service and Federal Forest Service have guidelines for disability accessible trails, and there are grants for creating such trails. Americorps workers might be available.

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Mill Pond: Brad Buschur said he is willing to draw up a plan to improve numerous wetland crossings on trails in the Dunn and Mill Pond areas. He noted that the Mill Pond Committee **oversees the trails**.

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Sullivans Court: Wendy Reed updated the status of the proposed trails associated with land being developed by Tom Neve on Sullivans Court. No progress has been made in creating those trails. Wendy said wetlands have been delineated along a town waterline that connects to River Meadow, but Neve has balked at constructing a bridge crossing wetlands leading to that area. Wendy will research the bridge cost. Both the PB and ConCom are at odds with Neve's intention to construct a house without first following conditions that include a wetland crossing road, wetland remediation, soil placement and other measures. The PB extended Neve's building permit until Aug. 1, when it will expire.

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Bicentennial hikes: Jessica Azenaro asked about scheduling the next organized trail walks in the Bicentennial series. Looking ahead to the Annual Trail Hike, Thursday, Oct. 17 and Saturday, Oct. 19 tentatively were selected. This would permit the Bicentennial hike to coincide with the Annual Trail Hike. Trail leaders will be consulted about the dates.

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Invasives: Patricia proposed the OSC work with the Garden Club and ConCom to offer an educational public program on "invasives." Although the Garden Club already has put on a lecture about invasives, the subject relates to the OSC Action Plan and is worthy of more attention. Patricia suggested the Annual Fall Hike (and/or the Bicentennial hikes) could educate about invasives, possibly through a "treasure hunt."

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MVP program: Patricia said the town officially will participate in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program. The local Energy Advisory Committee is leading the project in West Newbury and has just received a grant to support plans for climate change resiliency. The OSC will be part of the planning effort.

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Action Plan: Subcommittees of the OSC will be formed to do the work associated with the areas identified in the OSRP Action Plan. Subcommittee progress and issues will be reported at the monthly OSC meetings. This protocol should allow time to discuss posted agenda items at regular meetings.

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Grew land: Jean Lambert has renewed discussions with Joe Grew about disposition of his family land (60 acres along River Road). A July OSC meeting will be scheduled for him to bring his ideas to the committee.

The next OSC meeting will be held Wednesday, July 17, at 7 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m., on a motion by Brad, seconded by Don.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene Switzer

cc: John Dodge, website