

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 16,, 2022

7:30 p.m.

Please Join Zoom or In-Person Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8960752005>

Meeting ID: 896 075 2005

Present: Graham Bacheller, Marlene Switzer, Jessica Azenaro, Patricia Reeser, Jean Lambert, John Dodge, David Parrot, and Carol Decker, scribe

Absent: Don Bourquard,

Guests: Wendy Reed, Michelle Greene

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Fall Hike Re-Cap

A beautiful, but windy day for the October 2, 2022 OSC fall hike. Great publicity with Daily News article, posters displayed around Town and 50 people participated on the hike. Jean had suggested inviting Kristin Malpica to talk on indigenous peoples as the walk would be at the new River Road Reservation and lots of history with the Coffin Stream Assemblage. Jean reached out and Kristin accepted. Kristin led off the hike with a short talk on the indigenous people of the area. The walk continued to the River Road Reservation with a focus on invasive species. It was a very successful hike, but 50 people was a lot for a trail hike. If we had done even more publicity, we could have had many more people with not a good plan in place for parking or trail etiquette.

RDA Filing

Carol D. explained about the organized invasive cutting and pulling that has occurred at the Cherry Hill Reservoir Town fields. The future goal is to decrease mowing of the meadows, which will require a filing of a Request for Determination of Applicability with the Conservation Commission to determine if invasive removal of individual plants in the buffer zone will be allowed. It was suggested to permit two properties. Carol D. made a motion for the filing of an RDA for invasive control and expense not to exceed \$200.00. P. Reeser seconded. Motion was approved.

Page School Safety Study

Graham B. discussed the proposed Page School Safety Study which includes a crosswalk and signal to Pipestave along with sidewalks. A letter of support has been requested by the Safety Committee. Marlene S. made a motion for OSC to support the letter of November 9 for the Planned Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Page School. John D. seconded. Motion was approved.

OSC Member on Community Preservation Committee

Patricia R. stated that the Open Space Committee now has a permanent seat on the Community Preservation Committee. Patricia would like to see OSC members take a one-year term. Patricia R. made a motion that a full member of the Open Space Committee fill the Community Preservation Committee seat and an OSC member will change every year. Carol D. seconded. Motion passed.

All Access Trail

Patricia R. talked separately with the two other members of the group set-up to discuss the breadth of the Mill Pond Access Trail. There was no agreement and Patricia R. forwarded the information to Angus Jennings.

River Road Reservation, Dole Place and River Road Boating Access

OSC was updated by Patricia R. on the continuing need for a boating cartop river access.

In August the River Access Committee presented a request to CPC for \$30,000 to study the feasibility of and to identify permits necessary for constructing a car top boat access area on the river side of the Greenbelt River Road property. To the surprise of many, the agreement between the town and Greenbelt (whereby town holds a CR on the property) Greenbelt allows the town at its expense to install a cartop access area at the town's cost. Several members of the CPC took issue with the large amount of the requested funds. The area where the access was proposed is in or near an identified area where native wild rice grows. This fact would likely make permitting more difficult, if not impossible, for car top boat access.

Since the Open Space Recreation Plan has identified river access as a priority and since there are several other locations (owned by the town instead of Essex County Greenbelt Association) that do not have the environmental hurdle posed by the wild rice and could likely be permitted less expensively, Patricia R. indicated that she would not vote favorably towards the \$30,000 request for funds from the CPA open space funds! Other members also balked at the price. In discussions with the River Access representative, the representative indicated he would take the idea back to the River Access Committee that the requested funds be used to analyze all potential river access points and permitting feasibility for each one. The other points include one at Riverbend, Ferry Landing, River Meadow and the bottom of Whetstone Street. Should the town pursue acquiring the Dole place property for water purposes, OSC has previously indicated it would support the use of Open Space CPC funds if river access could be allowed on part of the parcel to be acquired. Since that meeting in August, the River Access Committee decided not to pursue the funding request at the fall town meeting.

Support of Full-Time Conservation Agent

Michelle Greene currently has 25 hours working for the Town of West Newbury as the Conservation Land Agent. There is support for her hours to be extended to full-time as she could assist with trail management more fully, monitor the CR's, etc. Part of her hours were supposed to be dedicated to upkeep of the Open Space trails, but she does not have time to do so. The OSC has been asked for their support for 40 hours for this position. There was further discussion of all the good work Michelle is currently doing with the summer interns and projects and also to put on paper what further duties we would like the position to support for Open Space upkeep. Wendy R. said that was already described in the job description. Patricia made a motion that we support the full-time Conservation Land Agent position to perform the functions as described in the job description for the benefit of Open Space

lands. Carol D. seconded. The motion carried.

Items not reasonably anticipated at time of Posting

John D. said that he had biked to the Middle Street Artichoke Reservoir and noted there was a very large, foot -deep hole that was in need of filling on the bridge. Blocks had been put down to prevent access instead of filling the hole which was dangerous for bikers and unaware hikers. A call would be placed to DPW again.

The next OSC meeting, normally scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month will be moved to December 14.

Motion to Adjourn: Carol D. made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Patricia R. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.