

October 21, 2009 Minutes

Attending: Barry LaCroix, Chair, Jennifer Germain, Steve Greason, Don Bourquard, Annie Madden, Patricia Reeser, Felicity Beech, Dawne Fusco, (Jean Lambert came at 9:15)

Scribe: Jennifer Germain

The meeting began at 7:30p.m.

Barry brought to our attention that the next meeting would be on Nov. 17th in the 1st Floor Hearing Room due to a scheduling problem with another committee.

Tracy Blais had been invited to speak to us and was first on the agenda.

She spoke to us about the state of free cash saying that the town had approximately \$1.82 million presently. The State guidelines recommend 3-5% of operating revenues, but in order to get a good Moody's rating they recommend 27-28%. Tracy thought we were at around 15% of operating revenues. The bigger concern is to maintain the same amounts year over year so that there is consistency.

There was a brief discussion about the fact that the possibility of a bond being used to fund and elementary school,- is on the table.

A question was asked about the **Sullivan** property and did Tracy know if anything was going on. She thought the Selectman had written a letter to the listing Real Estate agent indicating that the Town had no interest at the present time. This was news to us.

River Bend was discussed. Tracy thought, Gary Bill would do some gravel work on the road leading to the trail off of Way to the River as part of his maintenance plan. It was acknowledged that the warrant to appropriate \$37K to fix the road and put in a parking lot was defeated at the Town Meeting.

Tracy said that we could ask for money to be appropriated for trail maintenance.

There was a brief discussion on CPA funds. It was brought to our attention that CPA funds could possibly be used for debt payments on a land bond.

Dick Cushing joined us and was presented with a copy of the 2009 OSRP report. He was then asked about the **Sullivan** Property. His response was that Nick Cracknell did a bit of land use evaluation and then when the Selectmen sat down to discuss the budget they decided it was not going to be a priority in the present economic climate. Nick was called off further study.

Dick suggested that the **Mullin** property be incorporated into our trail management plan to have usable trails. The comment was made that the trails are impassable with no funds to improve them and that there is no parking or access to that piece of property. We agreed to look into what could be done as part of our maintenance plan.

Dick was asked for the Horsley Whitten feasibility report on the **Sullivan** property and agreed to make it available to us.

After Dick left, there was further discussion on the CPA usage of funds. It was noted that we did not want to apply for and “fritter” away our portion of the funds since the Open Space Committee would like to be able to use those funds for a future purchase or in order to leverage a purchase of property. It was also noted that we do not want to appear to not want any money. The committee hopes to address this issue through further education and publicity.

We thanked Tracy for attending and she left.

The **September Minutes** were read and approved.

We discussed what should be noted in the 2010 Annual Report.

The River Bend Parking Presentation was acknowledged and thanks were given to Felicity for her part in it. There was a brief discussion of how we as a committee should have advocated more for the parking but the overall feeling was that the short time frame in which it came to our attention was a hindrance. We decided to come up with a good plan to advocate for the plan before the Spring Town meeting.

The ECTA map was brought up. It was agreed that it is a fantastic map and clearly shows the public trails.

Trail head markers were discussed and a sub-committee will report back.

A brief discussion ensued about a Land Trust being formed in order to raise monies and apply for grants.

Barry agreed to distribute the OSRP Plan.

CSC group asked us to make a presentation to them in November and Barry agreed to do it. We are hoping to educate as many towns' people as possible about what we do and how we work.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.