

# ***West Newbury Open Space Committee***

## **MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 17, 2009  
(Revised at 7/15 OSC Meeting)

*Present:* Jennifer Germain, Barry LaCroix, Don Bourquard, Patricia Reeser, Annie Madden, Jean Lambert, Felicity Beech, and Steve Greason.

*Town Residents Attending:* John McGrath, Barbara Haack

The meeting began at 7:38 P.M

1. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for April 15<sup>th</sup> and May 20th meetings were approved.
2. **Changes in Committee Positions:** Four changes in the Committee membership were announced for the forthcoming year based on appointments by the BOS earlier in June. Annie Madden will continue as an Associate Member. Barry LaCroix will finish out the last year of Annie's two-year appointment as a full member. Steve Greason was appointed for a three-year term and Jean Lambert was reappointed, this time for a three-year term.
3. **Fiscal Year Wrap-Up:** Chairman Jennifer Germain suggested that 27 copies of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* be printed for an estimated cost of \$600.00 which would be submitted to the Town as an expense. The Committee voted unanimously to support this and signed the invoice.
4. **Chairmanship Discussion:** The group discussed who would assume the OSC chairmanship for the coming year. Barry expressed an interest in the position and the group unanimously voted him in as the new chairman for June 2009 to June 2010.
5. **Open Space and Recreation Plan Update**
  - a. **Editing:** Steve said that he had been editing the OSR Plan.
  - b. **Discs:** Steve indicated that he had put the plan on discs which were available.
  - c. **Maps:** Steve reported that maps were an issue because some were not highly readable and he has been trying to make them more readable. To help resolve this issue, he put both a new context map and a land inventories map on disc. The plan has 10 maps - 8 "old" ones and two new ones which are on the disc.

Don stressed including an updated Changes in Development (2001-2008) map and adding text to refer to maps as appropriate. He agreed to add the text.

Steve also agreed to put the final maps in the plan next week and to keep any changes made to the plan.

Discrepancies and inconsistencies in selected maps were discussed by the group. Don will address these.

Don also explained that the last map to be done reflects our action plan. He showed his draft of this map and the group discussed it, sharing what they would like the map to look like and their concerns. Don promised to send the map out to the group after he finishes it next week.

- d. Plan Distribution:** Jennifer reported that the draft plan with its maps was sent to the Planning Board, BOS, Con Com, Fin Com, and the MVPC Regional Director on June 1 with a two-week review period stipulated. To date, there have been only informal responses or questions on the review process and time. A response from the State is still outstanding.

Annie reminded the group that a copy of the final plan should be sent to the Parks and Recreation Commission and another copy should be kept in the cabinet in our meeting room.

- e. Addition to Plan:** Patricia advocated including a chart summarizing how Town funds were spent on land for municipal use versus land for open space.

**6. Sullivan Property Update:**

John McGrath updated the Committee on the Sullivan Farm. He explained that a letter concerning its usage had been sent out to abutters of the land and friends to help keep BOS attention on this parcel of land. The letter focused on sentiments of a sub-group of the abutters and how the land could be used for the town's benefit or not. John asked for a copy of the OSC Priority Parcel list which includes the Sullivan property and shared that a group (NAFSF) was forming to focus on the Sullivan property.

John also shared that his own hopes for the land included a mixture of uses that would be advantageous to the Town. Among these were keeping half for various agricultural purposes, using some for recreation, some for expansion of the business district, and some for Form A lots. John advocated soil testing for the land and noted that the 43 acre parcel was now listed at \$3.8 million dollars, including 800 feet of river frontage. Prompted by this last fact, the group discussed points of public river access around West Newbury. Patricia then asked if the Sullivan land had been perked and John answered that only a small piece had.

Patricia suggested that the Committee send a letter to the BOS asking for the involvement of the various stakeholders in dealing with this parcel. Barry agreed to make this contact so the OSC would be formally on record as requesting a discussion on the property. Further discussion about the letter content and tone as well as the selectmen's position on this land followed.

## 7. Other Business

- a. **CSC Discussion:** Patricia noted that we should make the CSC aware of the new land spending summary chart she suggested we put in the OSR Plan. She also noted that the CSC wants Open Space to present at one of its meetings and suggested that the OSC get on the CSC calendar for the fall.
  - b. **Grants:** Jennifer gave Barry a flyer relative to a grant and Barry, as the new chairman, will look into it. Patricia mentioned information on trail-related grants she had sent to Jennifer. She agreed to send it out to everyone with the hope we could make the grant deadline.
  - c. **Riverbend Parking Lot:** Felicity suggested the possibility of a Riverbend parking lot and noted it had not yet been presented at Town Meeting. Patricia advised looking at the Riverbend Management Plan, which was then the subject of a short discussion by the group. She noted that if this plan is accepted, we can seek a grant for the parking lot, and that the ConCom needed to support and approve the plan. Felicity will clarify whether or not they currently have done so.
  - d. **Town-Wide Trail Management Plan:** It was noted that the ConCom and ECTA are in the process of completing a Town-Wide Trail Map plan. This was also briefly discussed.
  - e. **New Barn and Indoor Equestrian Arena in Town:** A group member shared that there was a new barn and indoor equestrian arena building at Indian Hill and Garden Streets. Although the opinion of the group member and others was that the building was significantly oversized, it was allowable under agricultural uses.
  - f. **Wind Turbines/Cell Towers:** Barry advocated that the Committee have a future discussion on wind turbines and cell towers in Town.
8. **Special Thanks to Jennifer Germain:** Annie Madden and Jean Lambert led the Committee in expressing appreciation to Jennifer Germain for all her hard work in leading us through this past year of challenges. We are especially appreciative of the way she kept us all on track in updating the OSR Plan and how she worked tirelessly to move the Plan along to a draft form and submit it for review. The group thanked Jennifer and applauded her for doing an outstanding job during the past year as chairman.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.