

West Newbury Open Space Committee
Minutes of the meeting
Wednesday, February 25, 2015

The Open Space Committee gathered at 7:41 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 building with Chairman Steve Greason, members Dawne Fusco, Jean Lambert, Don Bourquard, and associate members Elisa Grammer and John Dodge in attendance.

Library Exhibit Detailing Town Trail Easements

Mr. Greason, Ms. Lambert and others described work to date on a large poster for the library that provides an overview of Town trail easements. Included were definitions of trail easements and a compilation of all the Town trail easements. While labor-intensive to obtain, this inventory of easements is enormously useful and will go into the next Open Space Plan. The list was compiled with help from Carol Lloyd of Essex County Trail Association, which manages trails in West Newbury. It was noted that Ann Bardeen of the Planning Board had mentioned interest in the little spurs and rights of way that may someday be essential links in an expanding trail system.

NEER North

Mr. Greason noted that Mary Martin of New England Equine Rescue (which must leave the Grew property this spring) reported that an appraisal for 52 Ash Street in West Newbury is underway. The organization is looking for some sort of movement by March. Ms. Martin sounded positive, but may still be working on funding. Mr. Greason and Ms. Martin discussed what the Town might do to assist, but deadlines for Town Spring Meeting articles had passed.

Beaucher & Grew Property Development

Regarding the 80-acre Beaucher property currently on the market, Mr. Greason heard that the developer's 90-day review period for considering whether to pursue purchase of that property may end around March 24. With all of the snow, however, it is unclear whether analysis of the property could be accomplished by then and an extension may occur. This item is premature for the Spring Town Meeting but might be appropriate for the Fall Meeting—and Vanessa Johnson of Greenbelt, which has taken an interest in the property, agrees. A question for consideration is the useful life of the Beaucher property appraisal for purposes of obtaining Community Preservation Act funds.

As concerns the Grew property, which abuts Beaucher running down to River road and which is being planned for development, it was noted that Joe Grew had visited the Planning Board's office for a few hours and had a productive meeting there.

Emory Property Expansion

Mr. Greason reported that the Episcopal Brothers and landowner Preston Rodgers are working with Greenbelt to get an appraisal to acquire forestry chapter land abutting the Upper Artichoke Reservoir, including the Water Dept's well field. Together, the parcels are about 50 acres. The appraisal is not due until April. This may offer a good opportunity for grants to protect the watershed.

Sullivan North

Ms. Lambert reported that at the recent Planning Board meeting Sullivan North developer Tom Neve presented two plans: a 1) hammer head (DPW's Gary Bill, fire, and town personnel expressed support of hammer head functionality); or 2) a cul-de-sac (which attracted Planning Board support). Neve did have trails in mind, but trails appeared not to be a top priority at this moment. Ms. Reeser's memo concerning a

water access trail was read at this meeting. The Planning Board evidently believes that with the cliff topography there is no river access from this property and does not see trails for this purpose.

Hearing that report, the Open Space Committee noted that it would be better to ensure that the trails are clear legal easements. Mr. Greason suggested that in establishing permanent trail easements it is important to have a long vision in order to reserve for the Town rights to trails with water access in the future, particularly since we cannot say what future developments might make river access feasible. Indeed, some easements now are linking placeholders for further development.

The OSC determined that it will be important to check to see if trails are on any plans for Sullivan North. The OSC discussed making a presentation to the Planning Board about trails, particularly since it is important to nail down the link to Whetstone. This has to be on the plan so it does happen.

It was informally agreed that

- 1) The OSC should offer specific guidance to the Planning Board on these matters;*
- 2) Ms. Fusco will email the Planning Board's Ray Cook for an update on Sullivan North; and*
- 3) OSC member(s) should attend Planning Board meetings to ensure good communication on trail-related matters.*

The Committee voted 4-0-0 to have OSC offer a proposed trail map for the Sullivan North Property to the Planning Board and to ask Ms. Reeser, who has interest and experience with this issue, to lead this effort.

Invoices

Mr. Greason presented and the Committee approved invoices for printer supplies and conference costs.

Minutes

It was informally agreed that approving past minutes (October, November, December 2014 and January 2015) would be a priority for the March meeting, and Ms. Grammer agreed to circulate draft minutes in her possession shortly before that meeting.

The Committee adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer