

West Newbury Open Space Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2017

Present: Don Bourquard, Steve Greason, Jean Lambert, Patricia Reeser, and Marley Switzer (your scribe)

Guests: Wendy Reed, representing ConCom; Jessica Azenaro, OSC associate member candidate

The meeting began at 7:43 p.m.

1. **Minutes:** The assembled members unanimously approved the minutes of the April 19, 2017 regular meeting and executive session (revised). The latter minutes, which are not public, will be retained by the Town Clerk. Minutes of the Aug. 16, 2017 meeting also were unanimously approved.
2. **SCORP:** The National Park Service requires every state to do a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every 5 years to be eligible for Land & Water Conservation Fund grants. Patricia said Massachusetts residents (especially OSC members) are encouraged to complete an online SCORP survey as an element of the plan. Steve will build a link to the survey on the OSC website.
3. **Annual Town Report:** Jean made members aware that fall is the time to assemble the OSC contribution to the FY2017 Town Report. Discussion of what to include and use of the 2016 format took place.
4. **Sullivan Court Trails and River Meadow:** Steve spoke about the status of the Merrimack Rim Trail planned on land being developed by Tom Neve. A trail easement extends along the rim of a retention pond across a rocky spillway to a scenic view spot. There will not be gravel paths on the wetland boundaries. A NOI will be filed to clean up brush and poison ivy. Wendy Reed said DEP does not permit pruning or any type of cleanup within 20 feet of the river. She also suggested more stakes are needed on the rim trail.

The trail Neve plans from Sullivan Court to River Meadow follows a well-worn path along a town water line. The current course requires two 70-ft. bridges to protect wetlands, which will be very costly for Neve and possibly will be unsightly. A bridge more than 30" high must have a handrail. Steve asked if ConCom agent Jay Smith could flag wetlands, because rerouting the trail could have several benefits, including the possibility to reduce to a 30-ft. bridge. Wendy said Jay was on vacation, and the request for his services first must be discussed at a ConCom meeting. Patricia said she will follow up with Neve, who is leaving for his Florida winter home very soon. Steve predicted, with regret, that the trail work will not proceed until Neve returns in the spring.

Patricia attended the Sept. 18 ConCom meeting and reported on the discussion of River Meadow Park. The residents' association has an easement for its dock and the remainder of the parcel is under the aegis of the ConCom. Wendy said the association president will file a NOI to mow small strips next to the dock once a year. Steve said the association stores the dock on the easement, which Wendy said is against regulations. Steve suggested the OSC could assist the town to mow a wider strip and clean up access to the river for residents. Wendy reminded the OSC of regulations prohibiting clearing close to the water.

5. **OSRP Update:** Informal work sessions are producing progress on updating the 2009 plan. The next such working meeting will be Monday, Oct. 2, at 2 p.m., 2nd floor of Town Hall.
6. **MEPA Site Visit:** Marlene gave a brief account of the Sept. 19 MEPA review of a proposed Open Space Preservation Development off Main Street next to the Carr Post building. MEPA Environmental Analyst Alexander Strysky walked what is known as the Drake's Landing site to "review alternatives to minimize the environmental impacts." Among those accompanying him were developer Chip Hall, consulting engineers, and other interested parties, including Dawne and Marlene. Attention focused on the extent of possible wetland replication and protection of an existing pond. *(A more detailed report on the MEPA visit will be e-mailed to OSC members.)*
7. **Fall Trail Hike Event:** The Greenbelt co-sponsored hike on the Walker Trail will begin at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22. Participants will gather at the Indian Hill Trail head, with overflow parking along Indian Hill Road. There was discussion of extending the hike to the Atherton and South Street Woodlots trails on the Greenbelt's 315-acre Indian Hill Conservation Area. Jean organized the last annual hike in 2015 and came prepared to dole out the sundry duties to volunteers, such as publicity, hiker's map, signage, hike day setup and refreshments. Deb Hamilton will be asked to lead the trail hike. *(Jean will e-mail task assignments to members.)*
8. **Committee Membership:** Jessica Avalone was in attendance and is interested in filling the associate member vacancy. An avid trail hiker, she has lived on Prospect at Church Street since December 2003. She can be reached at jmazenaro@yahoo.com. Patricia directed Jessica to notify Selectmen (Mary Winship) of her interest in serving on the OSC.
9. **Next Regular Meeting:** Wednesday, Oct. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene Switzer