

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, March 20, 2019
Second-floor Meeting Room, Town Office Building

Present: Jessica Azenaro, Brad Buschur, John Dodge, Wendy Reed, Patricia Reeser, Marley Switzer, scribe

Absent: Don Bourquard, Dan Carlat, Jean Lambert

Guests: Ellen Alden, Garden Street resident, and Annie Madden, representing Essex County Greenbelt Association

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

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Ellen Alden spoke to the committee about 6 acres of land that she and her husband are considering selling. New owners of the Aldens' farm on Main Street could be interested in purchasing the landlocked parcel contiguous to the farm property, but Ellen would support a sale to preserve it as open space. Years ago, she and two others advocated for West Newbury to become the sixth town in the Essex County Trail Association. The landlocked 6 acres have an ECTA easement along one border, and the location makes possible many connections to other trail land, from the Town Forest to Pipestave. Parking would be available at the Old Town Hall next door. Patricia Reeser said the parcel had limited open space value since the easement for access is "only for equine use."

Patricia told committee members that the FinCom had agreed to place two articles on the TM warrant that seek approval for CPC funds to preserve Brown Spring Farm and the River Road (Hufnagel) parcel. Annie Madden was present to answer questions about Greenbelt efforts to inform residents and to offer assistance in planning publicity. The OSC discussed methods of reaching voters with information before Town Meeting. Dates for the Greenbelt public walks of the two parcels have been set: Brown Spring Farm, Wednesday, April 10, at 6 p.m., and the River Road land on Saturday, April 20, at 9 a.m. Mary Winglass will send an email blast to residents about these site visit opportunities. Greenbelt has posted information about both parcels on its website, and those could be suitable for local flyers.

Regarding the CPA rollback question on the warrant, committee members discussed creating a flyer with simple language. Wendy Reed was to produce a document with clear formats for presenting data. Updated numbers (2012-2018) for grants from the CPA fund can be obtained from Jean Nelson of the CPC. Annie Madden suggested a 2-sided handout for TM, with major stories on the front and details on the second side. Talking points need to be streamlined. Can Jean Nelson provide the following?...

- * What % state match was realized for the CPA \$ spent?
- * Explain that first \$100,000 of real property is exempt from the CPA tax.

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Brad said two boardwalks are needed to span icy sections in Dunn Field and Riverbend (off Coffin Street). He suggested Deb Hamilton and ECTA could assist in improving/adding boardwalks that are used by equestrians. A discussion about the site visit to the washed-out section of the Riverbend Red Trail ensued: Brad said water bars would be needed to keep a rebuilt section from washing out again. John Dodge said ECTA offered that rocks could be placed in the "stream bed" to lessen the effect of water running downhill. Patricia said she noticed a drainage pipe from new athletic fields that empties in the trail vicinity. Wendy said she favors relocating a section of the trail to avoid the water-damaged area, going along the edge of level fields and then looping back to the Red Trail.

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Patricia is compiling the OSC 2018 Town Report. Current topics include completion of the OSRP and work with the River Access Committee. Any suggestions for content?

The OSC will meet Monday, April 8, at 7 p.m., to approve the content and design of the CPA flyer that the committee will post. The next regular meeting of the OSC on April 17 will be chaired by John Dodge, in the absence of Patricia Reeser.

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m., on a motion by Patricia, seconded by Marley.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene Switzer

cc: Town Clerk
John Dodge, website