

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

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

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

Absent: Don Bourquard, Dan Carlat

Guests: Carol Decker, Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary (retired Director)

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

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Carol Decker shared her idea to bring people into the natural areas of West Newbury in honor of the town's Bicentennial. Carol has retired as Director of the Ipswich River Wildlife sanctuary and now resides in town. She brainstormed with the committee about naturalist-led walks, possibly four times a year that would be geared to diverse elements of the community, such as children and non-hikers. Because the goal of the walks is to highlight and educate about the natural setting, it was proposed that these walks could be held in the same place so seasonal changes could be observed.

Optimal number of participants is no more than 25, ensured through a registration process using an online app (Signup Genius is free and proven). Carol will contact Deb Hamilton of the West Newbury Riding and Driving Club to discuss potential places for these walks and other assistance. Parking should be considered, and police notice could be necessary. Experience with the OSC annual trail hike can be helpful for the proposed nature walks. Publicity flyers should be created and physically posted, as well as posted online.

With the goal of attracting the widest pool of participants, Carol said she envisioned two hikes to the same location in the same week, seasonally. It was tentatively decided that the first walks would be held from 9-10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 4, and Saturday, April 6. Wendy Reed will work with Carol to select a suitable location. John Dodge will look into using Signup Genius for registration.

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Patricia Reeser updated members on two priority land preservation efforts: Brown Spring Farm (BSF) and the River Road Conservation Project (RRCP). There has been no change in the status of BSF since several failed development proposals. The committee commented on the community's emotional connection to the farm site. Regarding the RRCP, Essex County Greenbelt has created a promotional piece that will provide information to assist the group's fundraising campaign.

Patricia also reported that she, Wendy Reed and Marley Switzer attended an Energy Advisory Committee meeting on Feb. 11. Town Manager Angus Jennings will be working closely with the group, and there could be future opportunities for OSC volunteers to assist.

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Members shared information with the Committee as follows:

- John Dodge reminded everyone of the planned Red Dot Trail site walk at 10 a.m., Feb. 21 (meet at DPW garage). New DPW Director Wayne Amaral will inspect the erosion damage to the trail as it heads downhill in Riverbend.
- Brad Buschur identified the need for boardwalks on two trails: Dunn Field, to access the Orange Trail, and in Riverbend off Coffin Street, where the trail dips.
- Jean Lambert showed a copy of the informational flyer created for the 2012 Town Meeting CPA vote. It could be updated for the upcoming Spring TM vote, to present the arguments for and against reducing the percentage of tax directed to the CPA fund. She also reported that Dan Carlat has written a position paper for the OSC to create talking points. Jean will edit this draft.

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On a motion by Jean, seconded by Jessica Azenaro, minutes of the Jan. 23, 2019 meeting were unanimously approved and accepted.

The next regular meeting of the OSC will be Wednesday, March 20, 7 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. on a motion by Marley, seconded by John.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene Switzer

cc: Town Clerk
John Dodge, website