

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, October 21, 2020
GoTo Meeting Video Conference
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/360312677>
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United States: +1 (408) 650-3123
Access Code: 360-312-677

Present: John Dodge, Don Bourquard, Carol Decker, Wendy Reed, Jean Lambert, Marlene
Switzer,

Patricia Reeser, Brad Buschur, and Jessica Azenaro, scribe.

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1. Grew Property Discussion - J. Lambert

- a. Discussion of letter from Town Manager. Planning Board meeting will clarify issues in the letter. Explained confusion between 2 proposed lots for RFR (Right of First Refusal.) View easement added to benefit buyers.
- b. P & S - October 30th, 2020
- c. Subdivision in Lot 4 map; the southeast part of Lot 4 on the other side of the wires is a separate lot. Suggested there should be an RFR for lot 4. As in the exhibit sent 10/20/20 with the southern part of the map, Lot 4 joins with Cortland Road with possibilities for connections from Cortland to Grew.
- d. Request information from Nancy Pau.
- e. No access would be an issue for a subdivision of the property.
- f. Parcel is 74K sq ft. Whole Lot 4 parcel is 61A.

2. Kimball Road Property - J. Dodge

- a. Kurt Umholtz discussed property with Greenbelt. Price of these lots unfeasible per Vanessa Johnson-Hall.
- b. Kurt Umholtz was wondering about the availability of CPA funds.

3. Trail Easement from Old Town Hall to Poor House Lane - D. Bourquard

- a. Foster a trail link from Old Town Hall to Poor House Lane - 4 pieces, tiny piece beginning behind the Old Town Hall has a recorded easement for equestrian use. Next 2000 ft. (1454 - piece) parallel to Stewart - recorded easement diverging off to the east and crosses the National Grid part of the easement.
- b. The Deer Run developer, Mike Crowe, is familiar with ECTA and works with them for conservation. Trails would not be ADA compliant. No negative comments about the trail at the first meeting, although there are concerns.

- c. Potential bridging of Saw Mill Brook. Crossing the Austin property along the water instead of the top might work.
- d. Property plans mark half of the land as open space. 4 buildings. 1 existing house and 3 planned units, each of the 4 divide up the land in the plans. Unit 3 has a big swath of open space. Suggested to separate out the conservation restriction.
- e. The Open Space Committee needs to understand where the crossings are to understand the trail specifics. Arrange a walk with Crowe and ECTA for conceptual trail.
- f. Existing routes are in private agreement with ECTA. Private trails are not subject to ADA requirements. Unsure about Planning Board action. The Developer can change things with private agreements that are not part of the site plan approval.
- g. Easiest solution is the Planning Board putting trail specifications in the plans. The Planning Board will need to be part of the process.
- h. The developer can grant easements to ECTA at any time. Discuss the option for Crowe to grant easements before development with the Planning Board before 11/17. (D. Bourquard) Urge the Planning Board towards recording an easement as a condition before permits can be filed or a permit contingent on easements.

4. Dunn Field Update - B. Buschur

- a. There is a 20 ft. wide trail easement on the east side of the Pipestave Hill recreation fields that provides spots for horses to canter, which is a challenge between the stone wall and recorded property line. (East side of the fields past the end of the baseball field, past the elevated portion.)
- b. Current discussion between Wendy Willis and the West Newbury Youth League to move the easement into Dunn and carry all the way north and south to facilitate better trails for horses, more recreation spaces, and address safety concerns. Broader discussion about Dunn and interest of recreational advocates who want to increase playing time with lights, artificial turf fields, and changing the layout of Pipestave.
- c. Potential CPC request and design work could open up the sites to Dunn in exchange for easements.
- d. The transition from field to forest has sumac and grown in shrubs as well as a wetland issue.
- e. Discussions are occurring around moving the entrance to Pipestave. Safe Roads to School program considers the entrance to Pipestave as unsafe.
- f. Park and Rec is discussing ideas around a master plan for Dunn. Page School - proposals over the years considered vacating the Page School location which would place Dunn Field as a potential property location for a new elementary school. However, the approved CPC money at Spring Town Meeting for a new playground is another consideration.

5. Neve ADA Trail Update - M. Switzer

- a. Planning Board vote to accept the 10K and waive the requirement to put the trail in was split. Members are tired of dealing with it. W. Reed is collaborating on the cost of private contractors due to prevailing wage.
- b. Sam Joslin requires new trails to be ADA compliant. OSC will need to have further discussion on what constitutes a trail and how to obtain a variance if necessary.

- c. Discussion regarding Ocean Meadows and Drake's Landing trails and inspection procedures after development to ensure enforcement of conditions. Various ideas:
 - i. Ocean Meadow - Con Com enforcement due to deeded easement owned by the Con Com.
 - ii. Creation of bylaws with modifications where trustees have to maintain trails instead of the Town.
 - iii. Building inspectors enforcing conditions.
 - iv. Planning Board did not enforce conditions at Drake's Landing.
 - v. The Town Manager or the Board of Selectmen would have to enforce Order of Conditions. Ongoing trail maintenance is another issue.
 - vi. Enforcement needs to occur outside the Housing Authority.

6. Town Field Mowing - J. Dodge/C. Decker

- a. Background
 - i. J. Dodge and M. Switzer met with Wayne Amaral 12/2019 on schedule for town field mowing to see if there was opportunity for pollinator species to grow. Decision was made by W. Amaral to leave the reservoir fields fallow.
 - ii. C. Decker met with W. Amaral 9/2020 regarding Autumn Olive and other shrubbery needed to be mowed down. Discussed Indian Hill Fields/Middle Street and grants for field management and decided to leave those sections unmowed. A week later, the field was mowed by the Water Department.
 - iii. Residents were used to the field being mowed and contacted the Town. JB Colby mowed the field twice yearly in the past.
 - iv. Field meeting with 10 residents including R. Thurlow to discuss mowing, leaving fields to be mowed as late as possible for pollinators.
 - v. BOS member R. Parker attended, noted mowing as an item on the agenda for the Selectmen's meeting on 10/19/20.
 - vi. BOS Meeting 10/19/20. Contentious discussion surrounding mowing with Board of Selectmen.
 - 1. BOS member suggested they should approve the management of the fields and mowing and be informed of any changes.
 - 2. Discussion regarding channels used for change.
 - 3. Unprofessional observations during a recorded public meeting.
- b. Potential solutions for mowing and field management
 - i. Follow the guidance of outside experts for desired ecological management goals.
 - ii. Post signs regarding mowing for practicality with a QR code that explains the mowing schedule.
 - iii. Fiscally, better for the town to not mow all the time.
 - iv. Management plan around what may be in Con Com jurisdiction.
 - v. Suggest a mowing schedule and specify an outside contractor.

The next meeting of the OSC will be November 18th, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Addendum to Meeting Notice regarding Remote Participation

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the West Newbury Open Space Committee will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible.

Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Town of West Newbury website, at www.wnewbury.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner:

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No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town of West Newbury website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as practicable after the meeting.