

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, July 21, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Please Join Zoom or In-Person Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/8960752005>
Meeting ID: 896 075 2005

Present: John Dodge, Marlene Switzer, Jean Lambert, Graham Bacheller and Kathy Feehery

Carol Decker, scribe

Absent: Don Bourquard, Patricia Reeser, Jessica Azenaro

Guests: Wendy Reed, Chris Wile, Jen Solis

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

1) Knapp's Greenhouse

- a) Chris Wile, resident of West Newbury, spoke of the Knapp's Greenhouse at 189 Main Street and the recent disclosure that Nunan's Nursery would no longer purchase the property. The property is 19 acres and it connects to Job's Swamp with both greenhouses and a barn in poor shape. Chris advised the OSC to talk to the owners now to address this situation proactively, not re-actively when a developer is already in talks with the Marshalls.
- b) i) John said he would contact Vanessa at ECGA (Greenbelt) to make her aware of this attractive property.
ii) Wendy R. wondered if this could be an affordable housing location.
III) John D. had a text from Leigh Sector during the meeting stating there was a CR on the Marshall property; Wendy R. checked and indeed it is in 61 A.

2) Mill Pond and Dog leashing

- a) Wendy R. mentioned the recent dog incident at Mill Pond where an off-leash dog bit a high school student. Although there are signs posted that dogs must be leashed in the parking area, it is not enforced. OSC members discussed that unleashed dogs have scared off other dog walkers. Wendy also noted that DCR is banning dogs from their properties due to off-leash dogs' negative affect on wildlife.
- b) The Select Board will discuss at Monday night's meeting whether a leash law should be enforced at Mill Pond. Wendy asked that members voice their opinions on the subject.

3) Bridge through Wet Area at Dunn Field

- a) Kathy F. noted that a small bridge has been built over a wet area in Dunn Field which had not been approved by the Con Comm. The bridge was not sanctioned by the OSC. The bridge is

painted which is not good for wetlands and as built would not allow for the unrestricted passage of water. Brad Buschur had begun plans on “bog bridges” to be built in Mill Pond and Wendy R. was going to work with Brad B. on Con Comm approval. This was not completed.

- b) This unsanctioned bridge could be improved by lifting it up with cedar posts to get further above the wetlands; Marlene S. said it would be good to have Whittier Tech students and others involved in bridge building. Kathy F. will take the issue back to Con Comm.
 - i) Carol D. said she would contact Brad B. on the bog bridge plans.

4) June 22 Town Fields Walk

- a) Carol D. said the walk on various town fields with Hannah Mullally, Natural Resources Conservation Service Biologist and Xerces Society Pollinator Specialist on June 22 brought together members of the OSC, Con Comm, Select Board, and DPW, along with a few others interested in participating. The goal will be to assist in developing management plans that better inform mowing strategies so declining pollinators can better thrive as well as take into account recreational activities, areas mowed for hay, etc. A sub-group of the OSC will be formed to assist in developing these management plans.

5) River Road Trail Parking Area

- a) Jean L. noted the River Road parking area plan had been approved. It will require a large pipe for drainage as the area is consistently wet and includes parallel parking for 2-3 cars.

6) Merrimack River Watershed Council

- a) John D. had talked with Matt Dorn from the Merrimack River Watershed Council on the quality of the river and whether the OSC would endorse a Div. of Ecological Restoration grant. More info coming...in the meantime, the release of human waste into the river is of continuing great concern.

7) Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 pm

- a) Marlene S. made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jean L. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Decker