

West Newbury Open Space Committee
Minutes of the meeting
Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The Open Space Committee began to gather at 7:46 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 building with Chairman Steve Greason, members Alice O'Leary, Jean Lambert, Don Bourquard, Jennifer Germain and associate members Elisa Grammer & John Dodge in attendance.

Hearing no public comment, the Committee addressed its agenda.

Minutes

The Committee voted to approve minutes of the October, November, December and February, as amended, 5-0-0

Trail Easements & Rights of Way

Summary Poster

Mr. Greason noted that the poster summarizing trail easements involved extensive work but is extremely informative and an excellent central repository of information. He further noted that it would be good to maintain a listing of trails that are currently accessible and those that are not. Further, some trails adjoin private property, which should be respected. An issue arose with the riding & driving club using some private land. *It was generally agreed that the trails should be well marked and private property identified as unavailable to the public.* Mr. Greason noted that perhaps a list of do's & don'ts could be added to the OSC website.

Other Trails

With regard to easements at Ocean Meadow (which is now its own condo association), Essex County Trails Assn wants to open the trails. As a general matter, OSC is really interested in ensuring that this is done right, maintaining good relationships with the local community. *It was generally agreed that OSC—and not a non-OSC-member—should be the point of contact representing OSC, and Messrs. Bourquard and Greason will serve in this role.* Issue of location of poster in the library. Easements ECTA wants to open trail in Ocean Meadow.

The Committee discussed Insight Meditation's installation of no parking signs with respect to Town property intended to trail parking. *Chairman Greason will call the new Insight Director to inquire about remedying this. If that doesn't work, then resort to the Town Building Inspector or installation of a Town sign allowing parking on the Town land might be considered.*

Mr. Dodge noted that parking is permitted at Way to the River and this should also be made clear.

With regard to the Dunn property, *it was agreed that the OSC should follow up with the Selectmen to make sure that Dunn trails are protected when the land is farmed.*

It was also agreed that the OSC should walk the trails to see what areas need maintenance.

Sullivan North Property

Chairman Greason circulated the proposed trail map and talked with Sullivan North Developer Tom Neve. Ms. Reeser, Mr. Bourquard and Ms. Lambert attended the Planning Board meeting and advocated for trails. There is apparent agreement with the trail proposal as far as the high tide mark. Mr. Neve is willing to go to the low tide mark, but it is not clear that the Planning Board agrees. To access the river,

you would need a switchback. OSC's notion is to reserve the trail to the water, but leave it unconstructed, the concept being that in future years it might be possible to find a way to access the river.

It was generally agreed that OSC should follow up at subsequent Planning Board meetings to ensure that the plans include the trails. Also, it was agreed that the bridge over wetlands connecting to River Meadow should be as substantial as those at Riverbend.

Solar Field

The Committee discussed plans for the Town solar field adjacent to Page School with Rick Parker, Chairman of the Energy Committee. Mr. Parker described the location, orientation, fencing and other features proposed for the solar facility. *OCS generally took the position that trails should be preserved and perhaps expanded outside of the installation and the solar installation should as much as possible be discrete and consistent with Town aesthetics.*

New England Equine Rescue

It was reported that NEER would be closing on its purchase of 52 Ash Street, West Newbury on March 24. NEER still needs more funds and is interested in selling a trail to the town.

The Committee adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Elisa Grammer