

West Newbury Open Space Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Wednesday, May 27, 2015 *(amended 6/17/15)*

The Open Space Committee gathered at 7:42 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 building with Chairman Steve Greason, members Alice O'Leary, Don Bourquard, Jennifer Germain and associate members Elisa Grammer and John Dodge in attendance.

Minutes

The Committee voted to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2015 meeting, 4-0-0.

Communication with Board of Selectmen

Chairman Greason noted that it would be good for the Open Space Committee to meet with the Selectmen to provide an update and communicate about various issues as well as discuss trail topics to summarize what is going on.

1) **Riverbend.** Additional bridges at Riverbend to further protect wet areas have been planned for construction this summer. This is municipal land, however, and coordination with BOS is needed, although this is a minor operation and will not need permitting. The Conservation Commission has been consulted and is OK with this.

Chairman Greason noted that there has been severe horse damage in the Riverbend area. He communicated this concern to the Con Com, which intends to close Riverbend to horse traffic during the wet period between March 1 and June 1. Signage should be posted to this effect and this new rule should be posted on the ECTA, OSC, and other pertinent websites.

A larger discussion of horse droppings and damage to various Town trails from hooves ensued. *It was generally agreed that the best approach would be to communicate concerns and work with the Riding & Driving Club and ECTA to look for mutually satisfactory solutions to these issues.*

2) **Dunn Field.** OSC would like to know what is happening with farming near Dunn Field trails and would like to work with BOS in terms of measures to protect the trails in that area. Presumably a new lease for farming is or will be in place and OSC should see if it can assist in ensuring that the trails remain accessible.

3) **Insight Meditation.** Chairman Greason reported that he met with the new Insight Meditation director, who seems cooperative and willing to remove misleading no trespass signs that indicate that there is no parking on Town rights of way/property intended for trail users. *The Committee generally agreed that it is appropriate to have signage that discourages trespassers from wandering up the driveway to Insight Meditation itself, and believes that posting clear maps designating public rights of way would be helpful.*

4) **Sullivan North.** Developer Tom Neve has agreed to the trails and a connecting bridge over Town easements. OSC will coordinate and help with permitting and design. Permitting requirements and fees may pertain.

5) **Ocean Meadows.** Developer Steve Gillis has not completely finished, but the condo association wants to open the trails to the public in coordination with ECTA and connecting easements. Apparently the condo association has not been given copies of the original easements and plans and would like to have the condo board communicate and coordinate with OSC. *It was generally agreed that coordination with the Ocean Meadows residents is very important and that attractive trail signage consistent with that used in the Town should be deployed here.*

Budget

The OSC has a remaining \$332.31 balance in this ending fiscal year. *The Committee voted to spend this money to purchase trail posts for Ocean Meadows, Sullivan North, etc, as well as trex to make the square markers, paint and similar trail marking supplies, 4-0-0.*

Update and action plan on developments

Chairman Greason noted that a number of large tracts of open space are being developed or are being considered for development, and very few open space acquisitions have occurred in the past several years. Among the properties in play are the Beaucher property on Coffin Street (which OSC & Greenbelt have had appraised and is subject to a tentative 30-unit development proposal before the Planning Board), the Daley land behind the Carr Post on Main Street (which has been a subject of interest for Parks & Rec), the Grew property (the tentative development of which was presented to the Planning Board & which has been the subject of discussions with OSC), and the Emory and associated properties (which are of interest to Greenbelt & OSC and which have wellfield protection aspects).

All this, noted Chairman Greason, raises concerns about priority open space properties subject to development and Town protection of open space and its essential rural character. To develop an overall program and strategy, Chairman Greason and the Committee suggested a meeting with Annie Madden (who has shown leadership on these issues in the past plus Parks and Rec, Greenbelt, BOS and other interested Town entities. *It was generally agreed that such a meeting should proceed, and in preparation, the OSC should prioritize properties and identify the specific values and return the Town would gain from taking action to preserve these additional open spaces. The existing Open Space Committee report (which will soon need updating) should be the starting point for this effort.*

Open Space Membership & Organization.

Chairman Greason stated that his term and that of Jean Lambert will expire in June, and the associate members (of which there should be only two), have one-year terms that require renewal. Ms. Lambert has agreed to serve another three years as will Mr. Greason—but not in the role of Chairman. Elisa Grammer will be leaving the Open Space Committee to join the Finance Committee, whose members cannot serve on other Town committees. It was not clear to the group whether or not current associate member Mike Sabulis, was interested in continuing. If not, Greenbelt's Vanessa Johnson may have a name to suggest.

The Committee sought to identify a candidate to take over the chairmanship. Alice O'Leary and Jennifer Germain volunteered to step into an associate member role if current associate member John Dodge would become a full member and take over the chairmanship. Patricia Reeser would agree to serve as co-chairman with another member, but it was not clear how that would work. *It was tentatively agreed that Ms. O'Leary would take on the associate member role and Mr. Dodge would become a full member, possibly co-chairing or chairing with help and guidance from others.*

The Committee adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Elisa Grammer