

West Newbury Open Space Committee
MINUTES

(Amended on 7/15/2015)

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Present: Bon Bourquard, Dawne Fusco, Jennifer Germain, Steve Greason, Patricia Reeser, Mike Sabulis, and Jean Lambert, scribe.

Guest: Brad Buschur

The meeting began at approximately 7:40 P.M.

1. **Minutes** - The May minutes were unanimously approved, as amended. Don made the motion and Jean seconded. Minutes for January 2015 are still outstanding.
2. **OS Website** - Steve reported that he had added two videos to the OS website. The first, a trail video, features Riverbend and was made by Deb Hamilton. The second was a “commercial” for Riverbend made by the 6th grade class at the Page School.

Steve noted too that there are three more videos that can be made available and that the increased connection to Riverbend by the Page school and its students was another positive outcome of making these trails more usable. (Page students use Riverbend to inform their learning.)

3. **Committee Changes** - Changes in membership were several. John Dodge has moved to full OSC membership while Alice O’Leary has become an associate member. Mike Sabulis resigned due to work and family commitments. He wants to stay involved with the OSC as he is able and will continue to do trail work at Brake Hill.

After a discussion of who would serve as chair for the committee, Patricia Reeser agreed to chair for the 2015-16 year if someone else would co-chair with her. Either John Dodge or Jean Lambert will assume that responsibility. Outgoing chairman Steve Greason will continue to manage the website.

4. **BOS Meeting June 15** - Steve reported on three topics concerning trail-related issues on town-owned land from his discussion with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) at their regular June 15 meeting.

- Steve secured permission to build the four new footbridges in Riverbend.
- He inquired about the status of farming in Dunn Field and on the trails there. Town Counsel Mike McCarron agreed to follow up on this and Patricia will follow up with Mike.
- Steve discussed the critical situation on the town right-of-way at the Withers Conservation Area where Insight Meditation Center (IMC) has put up an illegal “No Parking” sign in the right-of-way. Mike McCarron agreed to send IMC a letter advising them on this issue. Patricia will then follow up with Mike. Dawne suggested getting a copy of the letter Mike sends to IMC.

The committee continued to discuss this last topic noting that a sign on the IMC property specified that parking was for IMC patrons only and that others would be towed. Jennifer suggested putting up further signage in the right-of-way indicating that there was parking there for trail users.

5. **Riverbend Footbridge Project Update** - Steve provided an update on the Riverbend footbridge project. He shared that after several options were considered, the plan settled on was that Bob Weatherall will build the four bridges for \$1500 as a contractor to ECTA with possible volunteer help. ECTA will pay for the entire project costing \$3500 with a gift.
6. **Greenbelt/Planning Board Meeting June 11** - Steve reported on his meeting with Vanessa Johnson from Greenbelt and new Planning Board administrator Leah Zambernardi. They discussed three sites as potential open space acquisitions:
 - *64 acres in three pieces owned by the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) - 18 acres in one piece - and Rogers - 46 acres in two pieces of 22 and 24 acres.* Greenbelt is interested in this land and an appraisal of it will be finished in July. The land, which may be useful for watershed protection, trails and/or passive recreation, might be on the warrant for fall Town Meeting. Funding for this property could come from watershed protection grants, Greenbelt, an SSJE fundraiser, and/or CPA money. Steve suggested working with the Water Department on this project. The group continued to discuss this site.
 - *Beaucher property (80 acres)* where a 33-lot subdivision plan with cluster development and open space has been presented to the Planning Board. Steve offered a map he had made of the Beaucher property to the group showing his proposal for four house lots and open space, a plan he saw as advantageous to the town. The group further discussed this site and its possibilities.
 - *Daley property at the American Legion building including 22-24 acres.* This land could have use as athletic fields and could possibly be funded through Park and Recreation grants.
 - Steve concluded by advocating ongoing attention to these properties.
7. **Expenses** - Full members signed off on Steve's expenses.
8. **Goals and Objectives** -
 - Jean reported on the success of the easement exhibit at the library this winter and spring. After some discussion, it was agreed that the next library exhibit would occur in the early fall, hopefully September, and would publicize the annual October trail hike, location as yet to be determined.
 - Don shared that he continues to act as a liaison with Ocean Meadows and may meet with people there regarding trails on this property.
9. **Appreciation for Steve** - Everyone offered enthusiastic appreciation to Steve for his years of service and continued hard work as chairperson. Thanks so much, Steve!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Lambert