

West Newbury Open Space Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

Present: Barry LaCroix, Don Bourquard, Felicity Beech, Dawne Fusco, Jean Lambert, and Steve Greason.

The meeting began at 7:43 P.M

1. **Minutes from March 17, 2010 Meeting** - The minutes from the March meeting were reviewed. Typos were noted and #4 was amended to read “submitted for extension,” not “approval.” Jean motioned to accept the minutes as amended. Don seconded this motion. The minutes were accepted as amended and Dawne will make the corrections.
2. **Cawley 61A Option** - Barry indicated that the Town has the right of first refusal after a legitimate purchase and sale agreement and that the BOS had asked the OSC if the Town should exercise its option on this property in the form of an easement priced at \$210,000. Using a map, Don walked us through the history of the property (parcel E) and clarified that there were no trails on this parcel. The group then discussed this situation including how the purchasing of easements should be reserved for critical linkages. With Felicity proposing the motion and Don seconding, we unanimously agreed that the Town should not exercise its option here.

We also thank the Cawleys for their considerable contribution to open space in town. In addition, we look forward to working with them on a trail easement we are interested in on the remaining property.

Barry left the meeting for a short while to confer with the BOS in executive session regarding this matter.

3. **CPA Warrant Article** - The article on the Town meeting warrant relative to reducing the Community Preservation Act percentage from 3% to .5% was discussed. This proposed reduction would severely affect West Newbury’s ability to access state monies under this Act, eliminating the Town from the second and third rounds of funding opportunities and thus decreasing state matching funds. Therefore, Barry moved that the Open Space Committee officially oppose this warrant article emphasizing that accessing more opportunities for state matching funds would ultimately result in a lesser burden on West Newbury taxpayers. Felicity seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in support of the motion.

The group continued to discuss how the CPA funds had been used to date, including the Town Hall project. It was noted that the American Legion building was also “in the pipeline” to be improved with CPA funds. It was further noted that legislation to broaden CPA fund use by expanding eligible uses is pending.

4. **Riverbend Trails** - Steve reported that Jeremy Baker had successfully completed his Eagle Scout trail marking project. Steve also shared that Daniel Peter had not completed his Eagle Scout trail clean-up project by the required date and had not contacted Steve to explain why he had not. Steve expressed his surprise and disappointment at this outcome.

The group then discussed the recent trail clearing done by Alex Hamilton, and Steve suggested drawing up a new trail map with input from Don and Alex. Steve also emphasized that we should complete this map in a timely fashion and use it as a template for other, future maps. He also advised placing the map at four major trail heads. The committee agreed to continue working with Amy Bresky and others on this project.

5. **National Trail Day** - Felicity emphasized that it was important to recognize National Trail Day on June 5 and Barry noted that our publicizing of this would a positive offset to the difficult climate created by the current budget and election. Various approaches were discussed and the group agreed that we should finish the Riverbend Trail map and hold a trail event June 5. The event will be publicized in the paper and will recognize Jeremy Baker's contribution through his Eagle Scout project. Barry will lead the trail day with Felicity and Jean helping with publicity.

In addition, Steve suggested that the OSC had projects for Scouts and that he would attend one of their meetings to make them aware of this. Steve will also write detailed pages for the trails, starting with Riverbend, and link them to the trail website page.

6. **Ropes Sub-Division** - This is a 10-acre parcel located at 75 Crane Neck Street. Don described the trails in this area and we discussed the situation, including the possibility of acquiring an easement for trails.

Another result of this discussion was recognizing the need to improve communication among the ConCom, Planning Board, and OSC. Barry and Dawne, who chairs the ConCom, will talk with Planning Board Chair Ray Cook about this. In summing up the discussion, Barry emphasized the need to formalize Planning Board-OSC communication by keeping an ongoing property list and having a representative from the Planning Board on the OSC. Don agreed to keep the ongoing list.

7. **Sullivan Report** - It was agreed that committee members should have time to read the report and two previous "phase" documents before discussing it. This discussion was then deferred until the next meeting. Barry noted that the report recommended that the Town should not pursue ownership of the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 P.M. Jean made the motion and Barry seconded it.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Lambert