

WILBRAHAM OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

Preserve significant open space by investigating, educating, planning, and cooperating.

MINUTES: January 30, 2018

Attending: Joe Calabrese, Marianne Ingrid Moner, Steve Lawson, Jay Taylor, Judi Theocles, Susan Burk, Bill Shepard, Edna Colcord, Guest: Mike Pelletier

Meeting Began: 7 pm | **Minutes for December 12, 2017:** Accepted

Motion: Judi T. | **Second:** Jay T. | **Vote:** 8 /0

Correspondence – Joe

- The correspondence regarded shredding, and microbrewing, topics not of OSRPC concern.
- During Monday night's confirmation of Bill Shepard, Bob Boiliard made an inquiry about possibly finding and taking photos of the four corners/markers of Wilbraham. Edna will speak to Lou Ellen. Judy will speak with Ed Miga. Joe is working with Tonya Bausch on this.

OSRP Update Timeline – Joe

- With the upcoming expiration of our current OSRP in mind, Joe found out from the State DCR that an updated OSRP Workbook will be available by the end of 2018. In 2019, the process of creating a 2022 – 2029 OSRP will begin by comparing our current OSRP with the new workbook guidelines to determine what needs to be added, subtracted or changed. Then sections will be parceled out to the members of the OSRPC to begin the process of creating the new plan.
- Joe also would like us to attend meetings of the Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Recreation Committee up front to announce that we are starting work on the new plan and seeking their input.
- Joe also would like to see comments made by Town residents in our survey be the basis for the new OSRP Action Plan.
- Sue suggested writing the plan in sections and submitting the sections in advance for feedback for overall efficiency and to minimize surprises.
- Joe added that the Conservation Commission has done great work in forestry management and it is hoped that the acceptance of the new plan by the State will continue our ability to do that work.

Bike Trails Preliminary Discussion - All

- The committee discussed three possible scenarios in terms of possible bike trails.

- One is that we decide there is no road or trail wide enough for a dedicated bike trail or lane, and that the need is being met already with the current set up. Under this scenario, we will just put biking rules up on our websites and in our kiosks.
- Two is to put a dedicated lane on a trail for biking or a bike lane on a main road like Tinkham Road. This would require signage all through the system as well as in kiosks and on the website.
- Three is to establish a separate bike trail whether paved, gravel, or flat. Joe pointed out that the time, work, and grant money required for this option will mean a lot of hard work. Sue suggested that if some roads in Wilbraham were one-way, it would address the need but might be too ‘out of the box’ at this time. Sue added that if a plan were to be formulated for a bike specific path, the outcome may not turn out as intended. It may get used by ATV’s, for example.
- Bill felt that hiking and biking are incompatible activities for one path and pointed out the wear and tear and erosion of walking trails created by bikes. Steve disagreed and didn’t feel it would be worth putting in a separate bike path for the small number of bike riders we currently have. Judi mentioned the DOT will be widening roads in the future and suggested we reach out.
- For next time, Bill will do further research, and Brian will report on the current state of biking on existing trails.

Trail Work - Jay

- A few small projects have been tackled such as blazes on the Crane Hill Loop, the Chuck Phillips Trail, and the Summit Trail. Thayer Brook and Oakland need to be checked. Alton’s was fine.
- Sue will be leading a hike on the Oakland Trail. Joe mentioned that Marianne and he have made maps with GPS coordinates.
- Judi mentioned Thayer should be extended. Joe says that that will be looked at once the bark chips from forest management decay a bit more and make the route passable.
- Jay and Joe explained that marsh bridges at Rice’s still didn’t have the go-ahead from Conservation. Judi suggested a joint meeting.

Forest Management at Alton’s – Jay, Steve

- Jay, Tracey and Joe did a walk-through of the area and found that nothing has been done yet. Jay contacted Carmen and found that delays in the bid process will set the project back until May at the earliest.

CPC – Brian

- With State funding not forthcoming, there is a new Mount Marcy proposal which includes the development of 2 lots instead of one. \$150,000 from CPC funds is already approved by the Town. The property owner will kick in \$16,000. The Minnechaug Land

Trust will kick in \$25,000. \$100,000 still needs approval by the Town. Steve said he plans to explain the amount being requested at the Town Meeting and in the newspaper.

- Judi felt it would be important to highlight the historic value as the site was used to defend the area against a possible attack by planes during World War II. Also, geodesic markers from 1938 are still implanted on the summit.

Back Burner – Oakland/Hiking Challenge/Survey– All

- Oakland needs more blaze markers. The Hiking Challenge is ‘dead’ for now as no one seems to be able to find the markers. It will be revisited in the spring.
- The survey needs to be pushed to gather data for the next OSRP action plan. Joe again encouraged members to each get 10 residents to submit surveys. Guest (prospective member) Mike Pelletier asked how the survey is being promoted. Joe explained primarily via Facebook. Mike mentioned cross-posting. Marianne suggested weekly posts to encourage sharing. Marianne also offered to create memes to draw attention to the survey and encourage additional sharing as well as increasing cross-posting.

New Business - All

- Judi would like to see OS referencing other endeavors that highlight the benefits of hiking. Marianne suggested including snippets/memes of education and information on a regular basis about the benefits of hiking on the Facebook page and will follow through with this task.

Audience of Citizens

N/A

Next Meeting Date: 2/27/2018 in the Selectmen’s Room at Town Hall.

Adjourn: 8:14 **Motion:** Judi **Second:** Edna **Vote:** 8/0