

WILBRAHAM OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

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

MINUTES: February 26, 2019

Attending: Joe Calabrese, Marianne Ingrid Moner, Steve Lawson, ~~Brian Fitzgerald~~, Jay Taylor, ~~Judi Theocles~~, Ed McCorkindale, ~~Susan Burk~~, ~~Bill Shepard~~, Edna Coleord, Mike Pelletier, Tracey Plantier, ~~Emilie Egan~~

Meeting Began: 7:03 pm | **Minutes for January 29, 2019:** Accepted

Motion: Jay | **Second:** Mike | **Vote:** 7/7

Correspondence – Joe:

- Tracey explained that the solar array application in north Wilbraham was rejected due to its scope and to the concerns of abutters. She explained that the site on Tinkham Road was okayed because the land was already disturbed by the hurricane and the array was mostly concealed. Since such applications have become challenged more and more by abutters, the board now does site walks of proposed sites to gather more information.
- The Planning Committee is also looking at possible solar bylaws. Since incentives are high, these arrays are attracting more and more clients.

New Trail Signs - Jay:

- The new” no motorized vehicles” signs from Conservation look great, but members expressed concern that nothing was included requiring dogs to be leashed. Marianne feels that signage for that is important because it empowers hikers/walkers to remind others to leash their dogs. Even though the leash law is in effect in Wilbraham, and it is stated clearly on kiosks and on the Town website, not all residents pay attention so the signs would help.
- The group also discussed the best method for securing the signs to prevent vandalism/removal.

Trail Work and Issues – Jay:

- The weather hasn't been great lately for trailwork. Jay and Tracey managed to do some blaze replacement though. With the current windy weather, it is feared that all trails may need clean up.
- Jay announced the first spring trailwork dates for March 13 and 27. Alton's Way will be done first on the 13th at 1:00. Academy students may help later in the Spring as may the scouts.

Open Space Plan Update: Sections 1 - 3 – All:

- Joe reviewed the first 3 sections of the OSRP. He mentioned that Cathy Barnes from Accounting volunteered to start looking for information in the summer to update our inventory of land.

- Joe started with the **Cover** of the plan and said he would gather submitted photos, and the committee would then make a decision. The **Dedication** will have pictures of Chuck Phillips including a photo of him at Whale Rock and one on a trail. Also for consideration is a Chuck Phillips Trail sign.
- Next Joe went over **Section 1** – the overview of the plan’s purpose. This section needs to be updated to be more specific about the committee’s mission and goals. Joe explained that the planning process section here really can’t be written until the whole plan is done. Then we will know where our research has taken us. Joe will draft this section.
- **Section 2** discusses the past 7 years and reviews whether or not our last OSRP goals were reached. Sidewalks was one goal that we found was tough to handle as it went beyond the scope of the committee. Our goal to create a survey; though, went very well as we have close to 300 filled surveys at this time.
- Joe said that according to the state, goals and ideas must fit the nature of the committee’s mission and purpose and that we need to use the input that we are getting from our survey data as well as what we gather from meeting with pertinent committees. It’s important to have relevant, reachable goals but not always easy to know in advance how reachable they are. Steve asked that we be more cautious. Joe will draft this section.
- In **Section 3**, Emilie will provide statistics and information on recreation in Wilbraham. Judy will revise the history subsection. Mike will deal with population statistics and maybe the development patterns section. Someone is still needed to revise the regional context section.
- Maps need improvement throughout section 3. Most are blurry and most map legends can’t be read. Judi will have to go to the historical commission to see what they have and get better quality photos and add more explanation. Other town departments will have to be visited for other updated maps.
- The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s data collection is one of the links listed in our resources that Joe compiled. Members are asked to use that source and the other links that he provided all members in their research.
- Joe then explained the Environmental Justice Population section saying that we need to evaluate more whether or not everyone in our community can participate in open space and recreation. Families without the income for sports programs; for example, can apply for funding but may lack transportation to practices, etc. Our ultimate goal is to have trails and recreation accessible to all.

Open Space Conference - All:

- We are fortunate that several committee members are hoping to attend the upcoming state open space conference in Gardner, possibly carpooling. The conference will cover creating an open space plan update.

Mount Marcy Update – Steve:

- The trail that has been cut thus far is quite wide and accommodating. Tracey said that the crew has been working in between snow storms. Ed did some filming of the trail. The machines that have cut the trail are still there. Water problems at bottom are a potential problem though. Steve said that the crew is hoping to finish while the ground is still frozen. Both Steve and Tracey believe that we’ll have a trail opening hike in late spring.

CPC Update - Brian (absent):

- Jay said that the library story walk plan is for two years – one year to plan; one year to build. The committee also learned via Brian’s email that Tracey’s 12 Mile Bridge proposal was approved by the CPC. The committee thanked her for her efforts and Sue who helped her present to the CPC.

Back Burner – Volunteers/All Trails App/Survey/Hike Day/Storywalk - All:

- Mike, who has experience with surveys/statistics has taken over the survey gathering. He will provide statistic and charts that can go in our OSRP. Joe will put the surveys that he has on a flash drive for Mike.
- Joe proposed doing another storywalk. Tracey feels Mt. Marcy isn’t too steep for it. Joe would prefer the Easy Trail because of the ease for families and because it has less tick issues. It will be discussed at a later date.

New Business - All:

- Marianne saw an article about ‘pirate trails’ and shared it with Tracey who described the article to the committee. Pirate trails refers to trails made by hikers and by people whose property abuts a trail. When those trails become more prominent, they can confuse hikers on our marked trails. The committee discussed marking pirate trails. It will be looked at further.

Audience of Citizens: none

Next Meeting Date: March 26, 2019

Adjourn: 8:14 **Motion:** Tracey **Second:** Jay **Vote:** 7/7