

WILBRAHAM OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

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

MINUTES: February 27, 2018

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

Meeting Began: 7 pm | **Minutes for January 30, 2018:** Accepted

Motion: Edna | **Second:** Tracey | **Vote:** 10 / 0

Correspondence – Joe:

- Planning sent along Cumberland Farms plans, a mother in law apt. request, and a request for an addition at WMA – nothing related to Open Space issues
- Jay – discussed a petition for a Green Community initiative which encourages towns/public buildings to be more efficient and saves money for the town. The petition circulated and signed.

Bike Trails – Bill and Brian:

- Joe reviewed the 3 scenarios discussed last month for possible Town bike trails from most extreme to least.
- Brian explained that he uses McDonald's, Crane, and Thayer Brook for biking. To Brian, Thayer Brook is the most difficult, not conducive to biking, and as Tracey pointed out - not a very long trail anyway. Twelve Mile, according to Brian, has a steady hill with a lot of rocks so it would not be a good choice. Of all options, Brian felt McDonald's is the favored trail for biking. He warned that bikers needed to be aware that people on horses ride this trail, and bikers need to look out for them as well as hikers.
- Bill reported that the Chief of Forestry of the White Mountains described the mostly straight up and down paths which exist on a lot of hiking trails as being difficult for bikers, even for mountain bikers. Bikers who feel that trails are too steep, sometimes build their own separate trails illegally, unfortunately causing erosion and other damage.
- However, according to Bill, the New England Bikers Association did three studies, and all agreed that there is no real difference between hikers and bikers with regard to erosion of trails as long as rules are followed and existing trails are used.
- A posting that mentions basic courtesy and rules in the trail kiosks was suggested. Brian felt that the rules are the same for bikes on trails be the same as the ones on roads. Bill did not think issues such as safety and biker courtesy were big issues as there weren't enough bikers on Wilbraham trails to cause any issues. It was decided to leave things as they are for now.

- Steve distinguished between regular biking and mountain biking and mentioned Spec Pond as a possible place for a regular bike biking trail. Ultimately; though, OSRPC seemed to think that there may not be enough need to justify significant change from the current situation.
- Joe said that he would contact Bryan Litz to see what the stand of the Recreation Committee was on biking and to see if there was a potential site on Town recreation land where such a trail could go.

Trail Work - Jay:

- The Lumberjack Club at Minnechaug volunteered to do trailwork this spring season. The dates are April 4, 25 and May 9, 23. Jay will take the students to the biggest trails and do cleanup. Bill asked if committee members can attend. Jay explained that anyone can go and that the work generally began at 3 PM after school. Jay will notify the committee of each session ahead of time.
- Jay also mentioned that cleaning out growth and debris from storms was a constant need and that trail work sessions would be scheduled periodically spring, summer and fall until snow.

CPC - Brian:

- The ADA trail is not up for reconsideration; it was not re-submitted. Jay will attend the next Conservation Commission meeting and ask why.
- There are 13 proposals being discussed including the Minnechaug fields which have the biggest price tag.

Back Burner – Forest Management/Hiking Challenge/Survey–All:

- 95 surveys have been filled out thus far. In the feedback from the surveys - people have mentioned bike trails 10% of the time, but love for the upkeep of the trails and the desire to see this continue is the most mentioned comment overall.
- Nothing has started yet for forest management at McDonald's as no bids have yet been received.
- Nothing has changed for the Mt. Marcy proposal. The Minnechaug Trust is hoping for 2 new, small grants to come through to help.
- The hiking challenge is on hold as it has not gone over well. People seem to find the challenge to be too much like a competition which takes the fun out of hiking and exploring, the main reasons why they like hiking. Tracey met a woman hiker who felt the challenge was too stressful when Tracey suggested that she try it. Bill suggested a comment box somewhere along the trail.

New Business - All:

- A new story walk, a flag day event, a middle school hike and a new Hike Wilbraham Day will be discussed at the next meeting.

Audience of Citizens: None

Next Meeting Date: March 27 in the Selectmen's Room at Town Hall at 7.

Adjourn: 8:15 **Motion:** Jay **Second:** Edna **Vote:** 10/0