

WILBRAHAM OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

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

MINUTES: March 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: 7:02 PM | **Minutes for February 26, 2019:** Accepted

Motion: Brian | **Second:** Bill | **Vote:** 9/9

Correspondence – Joe:

- OS refused a Chapter 61 right of first refusal for the 676V Tinkham Road property where the owners want to put up a Solar Farm. Years ago, the property was offered to OS by the owners, and OS voted “no” because the property is land – locked, because Fountain Park is available a mile down the street, and because it is not contiguous with other protected land.
- Tracey was concerned that the owners applied for the right to build the farm before they got the Chapter 61 restriction removed. She will look into this further.
- **Motion to refuse to accept the Right of First refusal:** Steve **Second:** Judi **Vote:** 9/9

Trail Work and Issues – Jay:

- Tracey was commended by Joe and was dubbed ‘chief scout’ by Jay for all of her work scouting trails in advance of trailwork dates. Her efforts have helped us to plan which trails need work first.
- The next trailwork session is April 3rd at 9:30 at the Crane Hill Trail.
- Bill has arranged for 8 students to do trailwork on Saturday, May 11 at 9 AM (2-3 hours) at Rice’s to put in wider switchbacks on the Underpeak Trail and to check the other trails. OS members who can attend need just to bring a hand tool as we have power tools to provide.
- Regarding the Rice Preserve, Steve brought up reviving a couple of old, rarely used trails. We will look into it.
- Sue asked about a possible connection of the McDonald Trail to the Woods of Wilbraham. Steve thinks it crosses private property. Sue will check with Melissa.
- Jay said that for routine maintenance, starting in May, we will stick to Wednesdays. Mike suggested starting Oakland early to widen it. Thayer Brook’s overgrown entrance needs early spring attention too.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update: Section 4 – All:

- Joe reviewed the list of volunteers for the various sections. Tracey and Sue volunteered for the remaining sections.
- In terms of section 4, Joe pointed out that flora, fauna, trees, and animal species are just much inhabitants of Wilbraham as the people living here who were the main focus of the previous three sections. As a result, section 4 is dedicated to their wants and needs.
- Joe said that to complete the various parts of this section, we need to compare the previous report to our most current information and make the updates. Sue noticed section 4F is out of date as the studies we have are from the 90's. We need to speak with Conservation for more recent studies.
- Steve suggested the Pioneer Planning Authority to help with our maps which need updating and improving. Joe suggested looking first at Town Hall staff and committee chairs. Carmen Angelino could provide input for forestry concerns. According to Joe, another resource is MASS GIS 'Oliver.' Tracey recommended the Audubon website. Joe also mentioned John Pearsall and the DCR liaison, Melissa Cryon. Sue suggested the library which has a collection of old OSRPs.
- Sue pointed out that documents in Word may not be readable on all computer versions. Joe said that he would send each committee member a Word copy of the section they are to do from the previous OSRP so they could check to see if it is revisable in their version of Word.
- Eventually, all work will funnel to Joe who will send the final copy to John Pearsall who will put it into a PDF.
- Joe reminded the group that we need to look at creating a bibliography entries too for each source. He will discuss that in depth in April.

Mount Marcy Update – Steve:

- Tracey has been up Mount Marcy recently. She said that work was done last week and that it was easy to walk up the new trail as it is as wide as a small road. She also said that going down was easy too because of the switchbacks. The hand cut trail lost the markers during the winter, and they should be replaced before vegetation comes in. We are shooting for a grand opening hike day in June.

CPC Update – Brian:

- Tracey said that there was a meeting tomorrow night of CPC to look for ideas for future projects.
- Tracey feels we could use a budget for more signage at all trail entrances. Joe said poor signage is the number one complaint he gets; people sometimes can't find the trailheads even though most trailheads have kiosks. Signage is needed on roads too. Tracey felt the budget could easily hit \$1,000 or more. Tracey also pointed out that capital planning vs. CPA is becoming muddy and needs to be protected. Steve agreed. Just because money exists doesn't mean it's meant for every project. Steve would like to see some money saved for us.
- Brian also suggested a new brochure. Joe will put it on the agenda.

Whale Trail - Tracey:

- Tracey said that we have an opportunity to be put on the Massachusetts state “whale” site map with a picture of Whale Rock from the Thayer Trail. This was put on hold pending further investigation. Joe mentioned that we should also get on the state hiking trails website.

Back Burner – All:

- **Open Space Conference** - For anyone attending the conference in Gardner, Jay suggested meeting at 8 AM in the Town Hall parking lot on April 27.
- **Volunteers** – Bill is working on that.
- **All Trails App** - Joe added comments for the other trails that Sue put up.
- **Survey** - Mike has entered information on 100 surveys so far into his Excel template. We are close to 300 total surveys. With only one from a student, Mike asked if we could get into the schools for feedback. Emilie knows some teachers and will look into it. Once Mike enters all of the data, we will know which groups to target to get our data to be more representative.
- **Hike Day/Storywalk/Pirate Trails** – tabled

New Business - All:

Tracey brought up a new idea about subdivisions and open space that she got from a conference. She is waiting for slides from the presentation. It will be a future agenda topic.

Audience of Citizens - N/A

Next Meeting Date: April 30, 2019 in Conference Room 1

Adjourn: 8:23 **Motion:** Tracey **Second:** Mike **Vote:** 9/9