

WILBRAHAM OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Mission Statement:

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

MINUTES: October 30, 2018

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

Meeting Began: 7:10 pm | **Minutes for September 25, 2018:** Accepted

Motion: Mike | **Second:** Steve | **Vote:** 13 / 0

Correspondence – Joe:

- In a light month for mail, all we received was a proposal submitted to the Planning Board for the addition of solar panels to a Town home. It brought up discussion about the movement in Town to place a moratorium on solar panels.

Dog Attack at Rice's – Marianne and Tracey:

- Joe expressed the sympathy of the OSRPC towards Ms. Gale and her dog. Joe also shared his own story of being attacked by a loose dog while jogging and the trauma that it can cause.
- Marianne reviewed the details: She explained that two loose dogs attacked a hiker and her dog. At the time of the attack, it was unknown where the dogs were from. She also explained that it was an attack that could happen anywhere whether on trails or roads in town.
- Marianne brought up the importance of having signs that point out the requirement that dogs be leashed on all trails, not because it will instantly solve the issue but because it's a first step towards education, and having signage empowers hikers to request that dogs be leashed. Lastly, owners who don't leash their dogs can't claim they didn't know the rules.
- Marianne also suggested inviting the Animal Control Officer to a meeting to discuss safety tips around loose dogs, as well as explaining the role of the Animal Control Officer so hikers know who to call if they encounter problems with dogs.
- Tracey had done some research and learned that the alleged owner lived in Hampden. Tracey explained one dog has been relocated to another home, and the owner of the dog who was attacked was frustrated at Hampden's slow action and inability to identify both dogs, and thus left several messages for the Open Space Committee on its Facebook page and privately. Tracey also pointed out the topic is sensitive because it involves two towns. Ultimately; though, a dangerous dog hearing could take place.
- Judi felt we should have a member attend the hearing, but members felt we don't have any authority or jurisdiction as the matter is beyond the parameters of our mission.
- Edna asked if the family could sue the dogs' owner - the answer is yes; they have the ability to pursue legal action.

- Committee members agreed the incident was upsetting, but could happen anywhere, and was not unique to Rice Nature Preserve. Members also discussed ways to defend against unwanted dogs such as pepper spray and citronella spray.

Trail Signs Update – All:

- Tracey currently has information about sign costs, but Marianne wasn't sure if additional information on signs given the recent incident might change the size and type. This topic is on hold until we hear from the Conservation Commission feelings about additional signs.

Volunteers/Bridge – Sue and Bill:

- Sue submitted an application to Berkshire Bank asking for help to clear trails; she was then referred to another source, but will continue to follow up and also will pursue other options.
- Bill informed members that the Rotary Club is not interested in providing maintenance. The Wilbraham Monson Academy may be an option for kids who don't play sports. He will follow up in spring.
- Sue also mentioned speaking with Bryan Litz about the potential for being sued if hikers went over the unrepaired bridge at Twelve Mile Trail. Tracey will be bringing up the repair of the bridge as a CPA issue. Tonya Bausch is willing to find people to take it on.

Mount Marcy Progress – Steve:

- The parking lot is done and looks great. Progress on a trail has been slow because of the heavy vegetation due to a lot of rain and hot conditions all summer. A wildlife trail to the east was used to cut the first rail to the summit. Orange ribbons have been put up for now.
- The team planned on using a Bobcat but it was too muddy; they will use the Bobcat in the winter after the ground hardens. Steve and Joe don't feel it's ready to be publicized. Tracey thinks the hiking club should try it. It is definitely not ready for an after Thanksgiving hike.

Trail Work – Jay and Bill:

- We finally have the tools purchased with Conservation funds. The OSRPC plans to try them out Wednesday the 31st and break them in. The current main issue is downed trees.
- 12 Mile has not been done recently but is in decent shape.
- One tree is down at Thayer Brook; the easy trail is partly installed and will be a nice and easy loop. A Ludlow contractor should finish the work this winter and the trail can be promoted for Spring.
- Judi asked if we need more tools. Jay said we don't need more tools, we need more people to do trail work. Judi mentioned using the shed at Town Hall for storage. Bill agreed to keep the tools he has at his house. Edna recommended a pruning saw.
- Mike hiked Oakland and brought bent markers, evidence of vandalism, and said several others were damaged as well. Jay said we'll have to put them higher and out of reach. Mike also said some areas were very wet but mostly clear, some narrow spots and down branches, nothing urgent.

Back Burner – All Trails App/Bike Trail/Survey/OSRP Update/Hiking Challenge – All:

- Sue can now map trails with her ALL Trails App and will map McDonald's and put it up. She should finish the other trails by the fall of 2019.
- In terms of biking, Emilie and Brian have an idea which will be featured on next month's agenda.
- Survey - lots of surveys have been submitted thanks to boxes placed at Town Hall and the library. Joe passed around a look at the data that has been accumulated thus far – 241 surveys. The data will give the OSRPC lots to discuss when it creates its goals for the next OSRPC update.
- Hiking challenge -Marianne still interested, Tracey said the markers should be bigger. It's tabled until spring.

New Business - All:

- Emilie found a grant to promote walkability in the community. Tracey will take a look and try to submit a request. There is also a yearly State grant for trail maintenance which will be looked at in the next meeting.
- Ed felt that we should use Thayer Brook for a day after Thanksgiving guided hike. Joe will see if he can get enough volunteers. If so, he'll publicize it.

Audience of Citizens: N/A

Next Meeting Date: December 4, 2018

Adjourn: 8:15 pm **Motion:** Judi **Second:** Tracey **Vote:** 13/0