

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 22, 2021

Time: 7:06 p.m.

Place: Internet/Zoom call hosted by Beth O'Connor

Attendees:

Members: Andy Brengle, Co-Chair, Wayne Castonguay, Co-Chair, Jeff Denoncour, Katie Hone, Ralph Williams, Andrea Lacroix

Associates: Ed Monnelly, Larry Eliot, Monty Monroe

Staff: Beth O'Connor, Open Space Steward

1. Citizen queries

None.

2. Minutes from February 22, 2021 meeting

Jeff moved to approve the minutes. Andy seconded. Passed unanimously.

3. OSR Plan 2020 – EEA Revisions Update

A few more updates needed to the plan. Beth and Andy working on edits and additions requested by the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Jeff helped on endangered species information. Beth reported that over 60 additional responses to paper survey had come in. Zumi's has been helpful handing them out. Beth needs help with data entry. Andrea volunteered to do some data entry. Closing out the survey April 1. Beth noted 5's across the board in Open Space being important. Once the survey and edits are done, the OSRP will be resubmitted. Beth reported that she had received all the required letters of support from town boards and Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

4. Greenbelt Priority Land Protection Mapping Project

Beth and Andy gave update on Essex County Greenbelt's county-wide mapping project. Will be resource for us to use in the future for grants, prioritization, etc. Not quite ready yet. Parcel level tool. Greenbelt looking at maps at a level they are tied to – work with municipalities – very helpful maps/tools. Nice to have another entity keeping the maps up to date – good compliment to planning office. Ralph was less optimistic. They don't have a solution to the problem of prioritizing individual parcels. Ralph asked more questions specifically on the usefulness of the tool – doesn't add to what we already have. Wayne added that they are looking through a climate change filter to measure land for climate resiliency.

5. GEPD Zoning Article Amendments for ATM

The Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD) bylaw is getting updated for 55 Waldingfield Road project, and will be voted on at Annual Town Meeting through Article 17. Article 17 section 2i – is the clause causing the most concern. The issue is that it allows a developer applying the GEPD bylaw to include acreage that was once part of the property – allowing applicant to use the original land parcel to apply for great estate zoning. Then it continues to use land that was already divided off – allows them to use it to calculate sq footage of what they can build and reduces open space area percentage. Planning Board working on how to tweak the language to reign this aspect in. The intent of the change is positive.

6. Open Space Manager Position Update

Kristen Grubbs is taking lead on some projects, Beth on others. A proposal to have Kristen assume the OS manager position as part of her over all planning duties was declined by Town Manager. Search for Open Space Manager continues, but Town has not attracted any new applicants since January. Will advertise the position again.

7. Other Items not Reasonably Anticipated

- Ralph asked about Bruni's project
- Monty asked about Kamon Farm rollout – closing end of June with Greenbelt. The town can't close on our portion until July 1. Will either close with Greenbelt first then us, or extend with Greenbelt and close simultaneously. Timeframe open to the public TBD

8. Executive Session

The committee entered executive session at 8:02 p.m. on a motion from Ralph, seconded by Jeff, and after a unanimous roll call vote. The committee then returned to open session at 8:14 p.m.

At 8:15 p.m., on a motion by Andrea, seconded by Jeff, the committee voted to adjourn.

Next meeting April 26, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Lacroix and Andy Brengle