

## Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 24, 2021

Time: 7:03 p.m.

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

### Attendees:

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

Associates: Ed Monnelly, Larry Eliot

Staff: Beth O'Connor, Open Space Steward; Kristen Grubbs, Town Planner

Guests: Chris LaPointe, Essex County Greenbelt, Monty Monroe

### 1. Citizen queries

None.

### 2. Minutes from April 26, 2021 meeting

Andy moved to approve the minutes with corrections. Ralph seconded. Passed unanimously.

### 3. Open Space Manager Position Update

Since the last meeting the position has been posted. Beth said at least one applicant's resume had been received by Ethan. Wayne and Andy reported speaking with Town Manager Tony Marino about the importance of maintaining the separate position while money in the Water Supply Protection Fund (OSRWSP) remained to pay for it. Both emphasized to the town manager the importance of filling the position, in light of the hot real estate market and bond list parcels more vulnerable than ever to sale and development. Tony remarked that he regularly got push back from Select Board and Finance Committee members about spending money on open space. Wayne and Andy noted that the program was self-sustaining through the OSRWSP and not tax dollars. Tony said funding for the OSRWSP fund was running out, but acknowledged that negative pressure primarily related to bond spending on past high profile land purchases.

### 4. Committee Membership

Andy said he looked into the committee's ability to appoint associate members, as he would like to appoint Monty Monroe an associate. State government websites for the Open Meeting Law and "Guide for Members of Public Boards and Committees" do not provide guidance on whether and how associate members are to be appointed and their privileges. The Town's 2017 Handbook on Boards and Committees states, "Associate members may be appointed or chosen to sit and participate on town boards, by and at the discretion of the board's Appointing Authority or on motion of the board and ratified by the Appointing Authority." Andy said that when he contacted Town Moderator Tom Murphy, Murphy left it up to OSC discretion how it

wanted to appoint associate members. No OSC members on the Zoom call had objections to appointing Monty to associate status. It was decided that Monty would be appointed offline before the next meeting.

#### 5. Kamon CR Draft Review

Chris LaPointe of Essex County Greenbelt discussed the draft conservation restriction (CR) set to be used for managing the Kamon property. Greenbelt was showing the CR draft to various boards and committees for comment and input prior to the anticipated closing on the property in June. Beth said the Select Board and Conservation Commission would be officially signing off on the CR in early June. Ralph asked why the document was so long. Chris said that CRs had evolved over the years to include many more particulars regulating management of properties. Kamon's multiple roles as farmland, water quality protection area, and recreation attraction made it complicated and deserving of detailed management guidance. Monty asked about putting limits on parking. Chris said that a parking limit was not included so that Greenbelt could be flexible over many years of property use. He said the Town would retain authority and veto power over activities on the land if Greenbelt was seen to undermine the CR or its intent. That included limiting parking to a reasonable number.

#### 6. CDP Presentation

Andy gave a presentation on the new Community Development Plan (CDP), an update of the original CDP completed in 2003 and updated in 2008. This CDP, covering 2021-2036 was completed in March and articulates a vision for how the Town wants to grow and develop over the next 15 years. The plan organizes its main ideas around housing policy, transportation, economic development, and capital improvement. Andy said open space is a high priority in the plan, even earning mention in the first sentence of the overall vision statement. The plan recommends that the town focus future housing development on the town center, and include mixed housing and other zoning adjustments to allow for affordable and other non-traditional models. Orienting more growth in the Town center will take pressure off development of green space on the outskirts. Andy concluded that the plan's emphasis on open space is good for our program but that we shouldn't assume town authorities will necessarily honor it as a priority. It is therefore our duty to remind Town officials about the importance placed on open space by the CDP if we see them promoting policies or taking actions contrary to open space protection.

#### 7. Other Items Not Reasonably Anticipated

None.

#### 8. Executive Session

The committee entered Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. on a motion from Andy and seconded by Jeff, and after a unanimous roll call vote. The committee exited Executive Session at 9:01 p.m.

#### 9. Adjournment

After noting the date of the next meeting as June 28, 2021, the committee voted to adjourn at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Brengle