

**TOWN OF ACTON
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 4, 2018
7:30 AM
ACTON TOWN HALL – ROOM 9**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Magee, Terry Maitland, Emilie Ying, Matt Mostoller, Will Hill, Katie Green (BoS liaison), Dave Marshall

RECORDING SECRETARY: Fran Portante

VISITORS: Susan Mitchel-Hardt, John Watlington, Sandra Mika

Future discussion: Open Space Gathering *sponsored by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.* Andy will discuss OSC involvement when Tom Tidman returns from vacation.

Issue #1: Minutes of March 2, 2018

Decision: Terry moved to accept the minutes of March 2, 2018; Matt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Issue #2: 2018 CPA Application:

Andy did not attend Town Meeting. The vote to fund Open Space Acquisitions at \$500k and fund an addition \$30K for support expenses passed easily. However, it was noted that electronic balloting that enables anonymity in the voting process may impact future outcomes, resulting in more difficulty getting two-thirds majority.

Issue #3: 32 Wetherbee Street: Susan reported that Ms. Delorey, daughter of the deceased former owner, Clem Moritz, responded to Susan's request for a meeting that she needed more time because she's dealing with probate. She asked Susan to look for the historic cellar hole. Bill Clauer speculates that this foundation site could be the Capt. Wheeler barn foundation. This needs to be documented with the Historic Commission. Susan also verified that the land was under Chapter 61 protection.

Andy requested that Susan set up a meeting with Ms. Delorey, Susan and himself.

ACT will be leading a walk over the weekend on the Wetherbee property.

Issue #4: Piper Lane Update: Monday night, at the ZBA meeting, there will be a proposal for 90 School St. It is a proposal to construct a house on the non-conforming lot. This could curtail any further attempt at configuring the back lot for development. (90 School St. is on the corner of the Piper Lane easement and School Street. The house had burned down.)

Issue #5: 53 River Street: The 53 River Street Revitalization Committee will be holding a public forum on May 9th at 7-8:30 PM. Andy noted that the Finance Committee was looking to

the OSC to fund the project in its entirety if it is all open space. Andy noted that OSC had approved \$450K for Open Space but did not regard the property as worth \$1M for Open Space and had not recommended the purchase as such. There are 3 acres of upland on the site that could serve for housing, but they don't offer Open Space value. Emily will represent OSC next Wed. night at the River St. meeting. .

Issue #6: Community Resilience Building Workshop May 9th

This is a day-long meeting sponsored by the Town in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The Water District, Natural Resources and Planning will all be represented at the meeting. Matt and Emily will be present.

Issue #7: Brief Review as necessary:

- 161 Newtown Road: The Conservation Restriction process is underway. Conservation Works is beginning the development of the Baseline Document Report. Also notable is the house is up for sale and the asking price has risen significantly, apparently, supporting the claim that open space does enhance the value of adjacent properties.
- 183 Newtown Road: no update; Andy will talk to Tom.
- Brucewood Lots: no update.
- Quarry Road: no update.
- Stonefield Farm: Terry noted the farm is in operation. Susan arranged to meet with Carver Hill Orchards, through the Stow Conservation Director. The CR for their property will be completed in June. Susan talked to Paul Simeone about Carver Hill during the CR monitoring walk. Paul is interested and wants to look at the CR and get together with the Lord family. He doesn't like the Caouette/Simeone CR. Paul is a friend of Chuck Lord and this can be used as a point of common discussion.

Andy noted that SVT had given them a draft CR in the past. They responded with an older version. Couldn't come to agreement.

- Acton Dog Park: Clare Siska couldn't make meeting. The Committee is now searching for site in town. Sandra Mika asked if they are looking at town owned or private land? Andy noted that they are a town committee, and, therefore, meetings are public. Funds could come from CPA but not from "set aside" or open space funds. There are many issues to address, but pro and con. 1) Dog feces detrimental to Open Space; 2) if an OS area were to be designated exclusively would that then exclude all dogs from other OS areas. 3). some protected Open Space lands exclude pets altogether, particularly Wildlife Refuges. Matt pointed out that different public lands are for specific purposes; and there is a need for educational outreach. The majority of Conservation Lands users is by dog walkers.

Issue #8: Discussion of Conservation Restrictions, including the Grace Property: Andy had attempted contact but no response from Nina Pickering-Cook, Town Counsel. Will try again.

Next Meeting – June 1, 2018, 7:30 AM (Acton Town Hall – Room 9

Topics for future discussion:

Land use education (Bettina).

Water District coordination.

Misc. items:

Andy continue contact w/Town Counsel.

Susan: Arrange meeting w/Lordes and Simeones. Stow Conservation agent is working with the family.

Harris St: the historic house was pulled down. The Town tried to negotiate w/owner who had a prior agreement with a developer. Owner waited out delay and then tore house down.

Elm Street: Creely house: divided into 5 lots (one lot has house); discussion of pocket parks. Not applicable.

Susan advised to keep oversized lots next to conservation land on the radar, watching for open back lands.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 AM.