



OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2022
7:30 am
VIRTUAL

Present: Andy Magee, Terry Maitland, Alissa Nicol, Matt Mostoller, Ray Yacouby,
David Marshall

Absent: Dick Hatfield

Non-Committee Members Present: Bettina Abe, Joe Will, Joe Cooney, Susan Mitchell-Hardt,
Meredith Houghton, Alexandra Wahlstrom, David Martin, Jody H, Karen O'Neill,
David Hardt.

1. Opening

Chair Andy Magee opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m.

2. Regular Business

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the January 14, 2022 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

3. New/Special Business

- A. Discussion – Role and Structure of the Open Space Committee (OSC).

Andy will be stepping down in June. He has been performing chair duties for at least a decade. Andy believes the OSC has fallen out of people's radar as a committee. The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is currently being rewritten without OSC input. Bettina stated that the OSRP is still being written and the OSC needs to update list of parcels. But Andy notes OSC has not been active in the process.

Options going forward: Disband OSC? Do a self-assessment? What do we want to do? Do we want to be more engaged? Change our charter (2017 Charter is for 7 members, one from ConsComm and one from Planning Board, and 2 associates)? Susan noted that ACT has been discussing these issues. Perhaps put together a subcommittee to explore. Are there others out there who want to engage? Are there other things we should be doing? Perhaps grant writing? The OSC has multi million dollars of properties in front of us. Should the OSC be more aggressive to search out more sources of funding to keep up with land protection.

Ray thinks the structure is good; the critical issue is funding. Town prioritizes open space. The challenge is funding. We should seek more sources of funding. Good focus of



energy. Andy asked do we have members to work on that? Heavy lifting to write grants. Everyone agrees we should do it. Susan noted that ACT has actively recruited for its Board and a member wrote a small (\$15K) grant for Stonefield farm grant. This member may be willing to ramp up with help from SVT which grants to target.

(Andy introduced Karen O'Neil, who was on the OSC when it was founded. Joe Cooney is from ACT and so is Jody H. Mike Gendron is the new conservation agent. Meredith is from SVT. Alexandra is from the AWD.)

Karen told Andy that she spoke to other towns who have local land trust on their towns' OSCs. Andy asked Susan if someone from ACT should be on the OSC? Susan says yes it could be helpful. She will bring this up at their next board meeting. Andy sees no conflicts of interest. Terry asked about ACT's ability to hold a CR. Would that be compromised since member is part of town government? ACT is continuing to hold CR's. Perhaps SVT could help more. David Martin says you cannot advocate for the nonprofit as a member of a committee. David's preference is that members of a committee be resident of the town. There have been incidents in the past when the town was not well served by non-residents. Alissa agrees with what Ray said about valuing open space. Climate emergency and climate action plan show mitigating services that open space provides. At the last CPC meeting Jim Colman reframed and said it should not be can we afford it, but we need to be asking what the financial implications are. She is encouraged by the CPC chair who is envisioning bonding and has developed a spreadsheet for next 10 years, paying down debt service while continuing the \$600K set aside.

It was suggested that the OSC hold a public forum to recruit new members. The public may feel shut out if people are not leaving after two terms. One to one conversations are helpful but maybe a public forum talking about future of land conservation strategies will educate people and bring others out who are not connected.

Alissa suggested that volunteerism is up.

Andy strongly believes that the chair should rotate. Ray noted getting someone to step up and be chair is not easy. Agree in theory but end up with who will do the job? That's the nature of a volunteer organization. Easy to lose focus. Strive for turnover, but in reality institutionally a small group of people do the work. Ray asks what should the focus of the committee be?

Terry noted there will be a public forum on the OSRP. Perhaps at the public forum we can also recruit for the two associate positions. Susan suggested ACT can be more helpful. She follows Concord as a model. Their land trust works with the Natural Resources Department and teams up on series of talks, pollinator gardens, land acquisitions. ACT recruited new board members using the 300-member list and invited



them to consider being on the Board. ACT can help disseminate the info that we are looking for OSC members. ACT newsletter states it's a land protection ecosystem.

Karen O'Neill submitted an app to become an associate member of OSC.

Need someone to work with Bettina and Mike on figuring out what OSC would like to say at the OSRP public forum and a follow up meeting. Alissa willing to coordinate that! Karen Oneil will assist.

Andy will be better at having monthly meetings on the first Friday of the month at 7:30 am for one hour.

- B. Discussion – CPA Funding. CPA applications are due November 14. We have an exec session to discuss a possible land purchase but are not entirely ready to go to CPA yet. Bill Alsbury's bonding scenario would allow us to go forward with another large parcel before us. Andy will start with our standard set aside application. Andy recommends we apply for 1/3 of the CPA pot and asks the OSC's permission to go forward with that. Motion made and seconded to do so. Roll call: unanimous.

4. Executive Session

Motion to go into public session and come out only to end the meeting and include Bettina, Karen, Susan, Joe C., Mike, Alex, and Meredith. Roll call vote unanimous to go into executive session.

The Executive Session ended at 8:30

5. Motion to conclude regular meeting unanimous.

Next meeting November 4 at 7:30am. Will probably include an executive session. Let us know if interested in working on CR and agreement with town. May be news about Triangle Farm Lane.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of January 14, 2022

Voted in the Affirmative November 4, 2022