

Open Space Committee
January 19, 2021, 4:00 pm -- Zoom Meeting

Present (Each from home via Zoom): Bruce Hurter, Tom Slack, Peggy Sagan, Fred Streams, John Cumbler, Bob Jackson

Guests: Denny O'Connell, WCT; John Riehl, Chair NRAB

Call to order 4:03 pm

Agenda approved with one addition: 5-year plan (Old Business). Minutes of 11/24/20 meeting approved.

Chair Report, Bruce Hurter:

- Bruce announced his plans to step down as Committee Chair at the end of this term and expressed his interest in continuing to serve on the Committee in another role. A search for a new Chair is under way.

Vice-Chair Report, Tom Slack: Nothing to report

Standing Assignments

Property management, F. Streams: Fred reported that there are 83 town parcels (143.5 acres) under Cons Com custody, and he has completed the inspections of all of them. The only issues he's noted are trash and a couple of new brush piles. Fred will prepare a report for Doug Guey-Lee summarizing his findings. He also suggests that additional signage is needed at access points to trails and to mark boundaries – to alert visitors to where public property ends and private property begins. D. O'Connell offered assistance of their AmeriCorps person to find boundaries using GPS and mark corners. J. Cumbler asserted that marking boundaries would serve to discourage abutters from encroaching on town property. P. Sagan moved that the committee look at Cons Com properties and create a plan to install the diamond-shaped trail signs. The motion passed 6-0.

Trail Guides, B. Jackson: The trail map for Pilgrim Springs has been updated by Wellfleet Conservation Trust. No reprints are scheduled at this time.

Elementary School, B. Jackson: Bob spoke with Mary Beth Rodman, principal, who confirmed that because of COVID-19, there is no opportunity this school year for school visits or outside walks/program. She mentioned that virtual programs might be an option. If we went the virtual route, Bob said the first step would be to determine teachers' interest; we'd also need to identify someone with the technical expertise to develop virtual programs. As an alternative, it was suggested that we provide age-appropriate activities to supplement the Trail Guides. The purpose would be to encourage families to take their children to visit the properties; the benefit would be that distributing the trail maps and

activities would not place much of a burden on the teachers. Bob will speak with the Grades 3-5 teachers to gauge their reaction. P. Sagan will work with D. O'Connell to explore what materials currently exist that could be re-purposed, including the "Trail Activities for Children and Their Companions" (developed by OSC/WCT to accompany the trail guides).

Liaison Reports

WCT, D. O'Connell: Denny reported that WCT is planning a work day in April or May. AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be deployed to work on the new Herring River trail and other designated properties.

Friends of Herring River, B. Hurter for L. Southey: Bruce reported that the Friends are in the final stage of preparing the Chapter 91 and Section 401 Water Quality Certification applications to the MA Department of Environmental Protection. The goal is to submit them by the end of February.

The Friends are interested in the possibility of strengthening the partnership between Friends of Herring River and Open Space. Perhaps there are some activities that FHR can help OSC with, particularly within the Herring River watershed. The Committee will discuss at a future meeting.

Housing Partnership, J. Cumbler: Nothing to report (slow progress).

CPC, B. Jackson: CPC hasn't met since our last meeting, so nothing to report.

NRAB, T. Slack: Tom reported that J. Riehl presented a draft of the Harbor Management Plan to the Board and has asked for suggestions so it can be finalized. Tom emphasized that the goal has been to make the report concise and readable – a useful tool for planning – and requested that we read the plan and provide feedback to John.

Old Business

Open Space 5-Year Plan – B. Hurter has looked on the state website for grants to assist with the writing of the 5-Year Open Space and Recreation Plan, but has not identified any yet. (However, he did find grants to assist with revisions to an existing plan). If necessary, there are limited funds in the OSC budget that could be used to hire a grant writer (approximately \$1,500 for 2021 and 2022). D. O'Connell estimates that the cost of hiring a grant writer could be up to \$5,000 and that WCT may be able to supplement OSC funds for this purpose.

Criteria for Land Preservation – B. Hurter thanked the committee for adopting criteria to guide decisions about land conservation and preservation at the last meeting. P. Sagan noted that we had not resolved the issue of what the new document will be called. The committee agreed on "Guidelines for Conserving and Preserving Land."

Town Warrant, B. Hurter – Bruce provided an update on Sewell's Gutter (Map 28 - 234 & 235). Because issues have been raised about access, especially to parcel 235, which passes through private property, Bruce suggested that the Committee withdraw these parcels from the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant. T. Slack made the motion, which was seconded and passed 6-0.

When Bruce meets with Cons Com on 1-20-21, he will submit Warrants for the following properties, as previously approved by the Committee:

- Map 30 -186 and 188 (Blackfish Creek), and Map 42 -137 (abutting Bayberry Hill Conservation Area)
- Map 28 - 80, 82, and 239 (north end of Indian Neck)

Meeting adjourned 5:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Sagan, Secretary, OSC