

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting - July 14, 2020

Members Present: Tania Lillak (Chair), Tonia Bandrowicz (Vice Chair), Richard Smith, Sarah Koch, Verena Karsten, Sierra Muñoz, Molly O'Connell (Senior Planner), Marzie Galazka (Dir Community & Economic Development)

Not present: Angela Ippolito, Danielle Strauss (Recreation Director)

Meeting called to order at 7:05 by Tania Lillak.

Minute taker: Sierra

1) June 9 Meeting

- Richard moved to approve minutes; Toni seconded. Unanimously approved.

2) Review Action Items

- Stormwater/Greenscapes: Toni has been in touch with Kelly at Greenscapes about pricing and requirements for joining coalition. Greenscapes brochures were handed out at Native Plant Sale; Toni has more if another org/event needs them.
- Harold King Forest entrance - Toni and Verena asked Gino to put lines near the entrance to provide guidance for parking. Spots should be painted later this week.
- Forest Management plan for Harold King: Toni reviewed the plan that was written and will send to the committee for discussion about entrance location
- Verena raised issue about wetland area near the trail entrance; installation of wood duck nesting boxes would require permission from land owner where the deepest water is - it may be in Salem.

Action Item: Toni and Verena will approach Salem Conservation Commission re: nesting boxes.

3) New Business

- Discussion about street closures: Molly feels that the success of the Parklet on Humphrey Street will encourage more discussion, potential need for social distancing in the future will encourage more alternative uses of public spaces.
- No street closures expected imminently, but we can keep pursuing ideas to take back public space for non-automobile use. Options for events or outreach re: car free spaces: National Bike to Work Day is May, Parking Day is in the Fall. Town is currently not issuing block party permits through September which could limit outreach events.

Action Item: Molly will investigate continue discussion around street closures

- Green Corridor: No update
- Phillips Park Beach Update from Angela: Phillips Beach permanent structure is likely off the table. Conn Comm and Open Spaces had submitted a letter suggesting consideration of environmental/open space planning.

4) 2020 OSRPC Plan

- Molly sent out the Matrix with private and public open spaces listed, details, whether or not they are protected. Molly requests further insights re: spaces and the matrix. Molly will review the data and send suggestions to the group. DCR will accept a draft plan in Fall without an in person open house, because of the COVID restrictions, but request that we do have an in person review with the public soon.
- Molly wants to present Open Spaces survey results for Select Board this month.
- Suggestion to run open house on Town Lawn outside; discussion of combining with farmer market on Sundays; no requirement for numbers reached, just need to provide a forum opportunity. Sierra volunteered to help Molly coordinate open house.
- Verena suggested adding a column to matrix for what spaces have management plans; add more details about grants, abbreviated notes and details for public information.

5) Archer Street

- Marzie has been in contact with the seller's broker; inquired about purchasing and reduction of price. Asking price is \$900,000 and assessed value is \$34,000.
- Marzie requested that the broker contact her if the seller is willing to negotiate. Current town fiscal conditions will not allow paying for appraisals or matching if the town successfully applies for a grant to purchase this parcel. Marzie will request right of first refusal, discussed need for maintaining open spaces.

6) Johnson Park

- CPA consulting architects have been retained to develop building plan for review
- Charet planned for July 25; rain date July 26. Plan for tent at Johnson Park to display plan and design concepts (shade area, irrigation, walking paths, etc)
- Plan focused on coastal resiliency and conservation
- Goal is to have design for build bids early next year.
- Discussion about shade structure plans: committee supports using natural shade structures (trees) in lieu of build structure.

Action Item: Marzie to forward park plan to OS&R Committee

7) Tree Task Force

- Toni had a meeting with Town Council for Tree By-Law but felt they needed more input from town officials before finalizing.
- Tree Task Force has asked for an addition about asphaltting trees to the By-Law - Verena and Task Force are working on a Standard Operating Procedures for DPW and Flyer for homeowners who get permitting to pave.
- DPW has planted serviceberry trees on Fishermans Beach - native species
- Looking into getting funding for flagging trees on Route 1 - Paradise Road
- Memorial Tree program: Task Force is looking for locations around Town Hall and Linscott Park; aim to restore old trees that will need to be taken down. Richard confirmed that Natl. Historic Register wouldn't restrict landscaping in particular, but

suggested looking at historic photos re: non-invasive equivalent trees. Discussion of space behind the library as a historical precedent for variety of tree species and memorial plaques in the area.

Action Item:

8) Task Force update – School Building Committee (#5, 52, 75)

- Sarah K. attended committee meeting; meetings are recorded as well. Honing in on options for new school: changes or new build at Hadley, or new build at Stanley with 2 storey and 3 storey option. General impression by committee members who attended recent meetings are that Swing space is better at Stanley: can keep schools functioning as they are while building the new school.
- Budget range: Stanley is more expensive because it addresses all of the districts students, others only address portions of the student body
- Design meetings are coming up in August and September - likely will whittle down 6 options and discuss specifics.

Action Item: (ongoing) prepare committee statement on open space if Hadley land is sold.

9) Committee/Department update – Conservation Commission

- No update.

10) Task Force update – Organic Lawn Management update (#78)

- Marzie has helped organize meeting with town and DPW in June to discuss organic policy; Tania, Gino, Maryane, Marzie, Sarah
- Meeting result: no change to current policy; OS&R committee members confirmed that they wanted to see movement toward the policy
- Sarah reviewed incident in early July of pesticides being used on high school track field when families and children were present.
- 300+ people have signed the petition favoring organic lawn management.
- Swampscott Reporter story and item on Select Board meeting last week: Peter Spellios stated that the town is prepared to move forward on enforcing organics. Sarah will be providing resources to Town.
- Swampscott Conservancy wrote a reporter piece in support of organic policy; Toni suggested working on doing an online educational piece with Chip.

11) Swampscott Conservancy update

- Native Plant Sale this past weekend: preorders and picked up orders at Senior Center. Good turnout despite different format due to COVID.
- Working on Forest River trailhead; DPW has installed the stone steps for the Salem connecting trail head at the dog park.
- Nature in the neighborhood articles have continued to be published.
- Annual members meeting was postponed because of Covid: will be July 22

12) Committee/Department update – Rail Trail (#9)

- Construction on the first section from Beach Bluff Avenue to the Marblehead line began 6/15 and is now complete, funded by Massachusetts Trails Fund and Solomon Foundation. High usage and positive response already.
- Next segment focus is Beach Bluff to Bradley section, construction has begun.
- Design for most sections are complete; now focus is grant writing, temporary and permanent easements, adjustments to the right of way from train line.
- Plans for ribbon cutting and rededication; ramp up fundraising. Marzie is working with East Coast Greenways to dedicate space and gain recognition.
- Marblehead has funding to fix up the section connecting towns' trails.
- Discussion about partnering with Swampscott Conservancy to coordinate native plantings and local donations of plantings; how to choose and maintain.
- Toni brought suggestion from Conservancy about including art along the trails, under the bridges, along fences; idea to partner with Reach Arts.

13) Committee/Department update – Historical

- Still discussing signage ideas; Historical Commission is proposing to fund two signs as they have funding in this year's budget.

14) Committee/Department update – Land Use and Planning

- Will be hiring a land use coordinator; working closely with the boards and commission (planning, zoning, open space, historic district). Part time position; hiring now.

15) Committee/Department update – Recreation

- Programming is currently taking place in four parks 5 days per week, from 9AM to noon to allow for smaller groups and more distancing.

16) Grants Update: Marzie and Molly are submitting grant for Windsor Park project; received \$20K in 2019 to replace the equipment; requested design funding to maximize a match from town funding and request to double it.

- Goals: improvement of play structures, additional land request from Aggregate.

17) Interpretive signs for recreation areas

- Lehman from historic commission is working on text; Historic Commission is looking for historic photos and have chosen sites; discussion of what items should be highlighted, first sign we would like to see.

18) Confirmation of next meeting date – Tuesday, August 11, 2020

19) Motion to adjourn; moved by Toni; seconded by Sierra, consensus approval.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38.