

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting – January 10, 2017 Minutes

Time: 7:05 PM – 9:05 PM **Location:** Town Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Mary Webster, Chair; Tania Lillak, Vice Chair; Jim Olivetti, Clerk; Toni Bandrowicz, Richard Smith, Sara Pruett, Danielle Strauss, Recreation Director, ex officio; Angela Ippolito, Planning Board Chair.

Members Absent: Pete Kane, Director of Community Development, ex officio; Patrick Jones, Selectman Liaison.

The minutes of the December meeting were unanimously approved.

The Chair reviewed a letter from Swampscott resident, Eugene O'Brien, inquiring about how to access the Blythewood property public easement and whether or not the easement offered access suitable for fishing. Discussion ensued about the need to post warning signs alerting the public to possible dangers near the shoreline ledges. Jim noted that Nahant has recently posted similar signs at Eastern Point. It was pointed out that objective #72 of the Open Space Plan entails creating a public access and management plan for the Blythewood property.

Action: Toni will follow up with Pete to begin process of creating such an access and management plan.

Action: Mary will respond to Mr. O'Brien's letter.

1. White Court.

Angela briefed the OS&RPC on the Planning Board's discussion of Jan. 9 relating to White Court. The Planning Board will address with the Board of Selectmen the need for a business plan that would present the feasibility and advantages of town ownership of White Court. The plan would include success stories from other towns that took over ownership of similar properties. Sarah pointed out that the Swampscott Foundation still is in existence and could serve as a focal point for private fund raising efforts to purchase White Court for the benefit of the town.

Action: Toni will check with Naomi Dreeben to determine whether or not the town has talked with the Trustees of Reservations about White Court, and, if not, she will reach out to the Trustees.

Action: A Committee vote was unanimous for Toni to draft a followup letter to the BoS now that the monastery purchase has failed, to encourage the Selectment to find a way to preserve the 6.2 acre shorefront property for the town.

2. Fields Maintenance.

Tania reported that the Athletic Field Advisory Committee supports handling maintenance of the town athletic fields using an organic approach. This includes the need to hire two additional DPW full time workers dedicated to field maintenance during the playing season. Tania asked if the OS&RPC should go before the Finance Committee to express support to add these workers to promote more environmental care of the town's fields. It was noted that many of the Open

Space Plan objectives involve the DPW as at least co-responsible party, and, therefore, it would be reasonable to lend our support.

Action: Danielle will find out what the timeline is for formally addressing the Finance Committee in order to support the field maintenance work.

3. Land & Water Conservation Grant Program

The Committee discussed the opportunities for this Grant Program which provides funds to local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. It was noted that the early March deadline does not leave much time to prepare a proposal. The grant is a 50% match with a successful Town Meeting vote required that appropriates 100% of the total project cost. There was discussion of applying for the grant to upgrade a playground at Windsor or Linscott Park.

Action: Danielle will followup with Pete Kane to receive guidance on the process and timing of an application.

4. Signage at Ewing Woods and Harold King Forest

Danielle reported that the Duncan Page's Eagle Scout project is moving forward. He plans to remark the trail, clear brush, and construct a kiosk at the head of the trail. An unveiling of the improvements would be scheduled for Fall. Sarah suggested that stairs down into the park from the parking lot are also needed. Jim said that a sign in addition to a kiosk is needed.

Action: Danielle and Duncan will present the plan to the Conservation Commission in February.

Action: Jim and Toni will talk to Gino Cresta about a sign for Harold King and Ewing Woods once Gino's service as Interim Town Administrator is completed.

5. Maintenance Plan – Harold King Forest

The Committee approved the final draft of the Maintenance Plan Toni prepared.

6. Friends of Swampscott Conservation Land.

Toni suggested that the Friends of Lynn Woods organization could serve as a model for a similar effort in Swampscott, although starting at a much more modest scale. Jim observed that the Eagle Scout project unveiling in the Fall might serve as an organizing focus to recruit members. The need for a Facebook page or website for the Friends group was noted, however, there was some concern that this would require conscientious updating to be effective. The Committee wondered if the Assistant Town Planner could take on the updating of a Friends web presence as part of his job. Preliminary consensus on the name "Friends of Swampscott Woods" for the organization was reached.

Action: Danielle will contact the Assistant Town Planner and town's IT Director to determine how best to set up and manage such an internet presence.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 13th, as the normal Tuesday meeting falls on Valentine's Day.