

Open Spaces & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting

April 28, 2020

Members Present: Tania Lillak, Tonia Bandrowicz, Sarah Koch, Richard Smith, Sierra Munoz, and Molly O'Connell (Senior Planner) Verena Karsten, Angela Ippolito, Marzie Galazka

Not present: Danielle Strauss (Recreation Director)

Tania Lillak calls the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

Welcome to Verena Karsten

Our newest OSRP Committee member worked with Sarah on tree task force over the last 2 years. A 10-year resident of Thomas Rd, she has been leading the tree task force, working with DPW in terms of where to plant trees, and was also a member of the former Municipal Design Committee. As someone who studied biology, she loves planting, cares deeply about the environment, and naturally open space is very important to her. Tania will send letter to Select Board requesting that they officially accept our recommendation and appoint her.

Minutes: Minutes from March 10, 2020 were unanimously approved.

Quick update: Toni got gift and card for Sarah and Tania dropped it off at her home.

Stormwater: In furtherance of OS&RP Item #62, Toni had previously suggested that the town join Greenscapes North Shore Coalition which assists communities in addressing stormwater and water quality issues.

Action item: Toni to talk to Gino and investigate Greenscapes -- tabled to April meeting.

4/27 Update: Toni has not had a chance to follow up

Open Space Survey

Molly sent out some preliminary results to us which do not include individual responses since the survey still live/open. There are 33 responses to date. She asked the Committee if we would like to see if we can be added to a Select Board meeting agenda, since SB is taking up some other items (other than COVID) in their meetings. We could give an update on the OSRP update and promote the survey. Survey would

need to close some time in June. Grants from DCR due in July and need to have a plan in place, possible to extend.

Open house was rescheduled to June 2, but that date is still tentative. Molly is exploring idea of Zoom charrette to allow for more public access. Molly will ask Allie again to get it posted on Swampscott Facebook page, then we can post and repost again. It was also suggested that we should promote through Patch and Reporter. Toni and Verena discussed writing a short article, loop in Lawn task force plus Conservancy and Open Space update, submit to Reporter and Patch. Marzie will reach out to Will Dowd from Reporter.

Action: We won't review survey results during meeting tonight, we'll each review info Molly sent and then hope to gather more survey results. Marzie and Molly will Investigate adding topic to Select Board meeting. Verena and Toni to collaborate on writing an article.

Community Development Update:

Rail trail: First segment from Beach Bluff to Marblehead line is out to bid -- opening day of bid is May 22. We are fortunate that we have grant funding from the state to support this action, and we also received a donation from the Solomon foundation for the 20% match. Hopeful to start construction in early June as funding expires June 30.

CIC requested grant funding for design services for Johnson, Abbott and Windsor Parks. Johnson Park (at New Ocean House Beach) had some concept designs completed by Tufts group through a grant a few years ago. Architect now working with those plans to incorporate best elements into final plan. Our goal is to have 100% design plans/specs ready to go out to bid right after seeking Town Meeting approval on June 22.

Phillips and Cassidy Beach entry way plans are being finalized by Kleinfelder. Kleinfelder will go before PB (5-11) and ConComm (5-14) to present updated Coastal Resiliency Plan for these sites and seek final input/recommendations for both. The proposed bath house at Phillips Beach is not favored by Open Space, Planning or Conservation. It is presumed that this building was included as it relates to a suggestion from the Harbor Plan. Funding is not available from the Kleinfelder grant money for the construction of bath house. The OSRP members were in agreement that the 25K approved at TM should not be allocated towards a feasibility study for a bath house, since a bath house should not be built where it sits on conservation land, corrupts and causes a permanent obstruction of an open beach landscape, does not comply with any Town zoning, and in fact, is not allowed. We would like to use \$25000 for other purposes. Cassidy park design should include additional Kayak rack. Concern was that they would be in harms way with high tides, it was suggested that a rack could be placed within the access area.

Action: Marzie will try to coordinate with Allie to have a discussion with Sean Fitzgerald regarding bath house.

Tree Task Force update:

Haven't had a meeting since last year, but now have the go ahead for virtual meeting in May. Reviewed the Tree bylaw, gave input and will discuss further. DPW will improve Fisherman's Beach tree plantings, replacing old cherry trees lining the street, Gino's plan is to work on the first stretch from Plotka's Dentist office to Cassidy Park. He has already ordered trees and will couple the work with sidewalk improvements.

Working with Kelly and Molly on tree inventory. Have outdated inventory list which unfortunately was created without ability to make updates. Nobody has access to database which is 3-4 years old. Trying to extract data and put in GIS database to make updates. Other initiative is work on a tree manual discussing care, placement and how to obtain permits. Get a sample from other towns. Marzie worked with funeral homes to create memorial tree program. Form on DPW web to donate money for Tree fund. There has been some vandalism happening behind Nason Rd and Upper Jackson Park. Seems juvenile and may dissipate with more pedestrian activity.

New School Building Committee: With lead of Suzanne Wright and architect/manager firms they have had 2 zoom meetings: 5 potential sites were discussed: Stanley School, Middle School, Hadley School, and alongside Middle school. Whittled down to 3 since Phillips Park, and DPW yard have been eliminated. Plan for Hadley is renovation, or new build of similar size school. Plan for Middle School is to build on upper playing field. Plan for Stanley is building of new 3 story school on existing playing field so can keep existing school open during construction, and negotiating with UU church to use its entrance. Tania stated the importance of not losing any open space in building the new school. Next big analysis is cost. Next upcoming SBC meeting to discuss educational visioning as it applies to building site to be selected. Concern about fate of Hadley property and its open space should Stanley be chosen.

Conservation Commission update: One controversial project on Northstone Road, the owners want to put in a swimming pool and lots of other stuff...concerned about effect on seawall or flooding.

Waiting for Town's consultants on Rail Trail to respond to ConComm's consultants.

Forest management plan is done – now we can discuss implementation of some suggested projects (e.g., creation of another path, construction of duck blind) with appropriate town committees and departments and incorporate these new objectives into new OS plan. Eagle scout project who was going to do kiosk for Forest River

trailhead behind cemetery, hopefully extended and might get materials donated from Home Depot. Will send Molly MAPC resources for Eagle Scouts.

Green Corridor

Molly/Marzie suggested that green corridor maps be incorporated into walking maps that they are working on, looking for funding working on grants. Looked at green corridor map from 2013 plan. How do we emphasize it going forward? Highlight connections? Extend walking area through Olmsted district Monument Ave, check out trails right behind Tedesco. Is there a way to use those trails? Can we get permission to walk there? Also consider how to protect Ewing woods re: potential school development.

Identify streets that would be priorities to advance, the most scenic and important streets that connect the open spaces, to coordinate improving sidewalks, filling in tree canopy, more pedestrian friendly, focus Gino's attention on prioritizing getting those streets done. Molly will do research on DPW activities so that we can coordinate for street improvement, make sure DPW and complete streets planning are considered for green corridors. We agreed to each take a "section" to walk through and assess. During our walks we will be looking for walkable sidewalks, quantity and quality of trees, and other green aspects:

Action Item: Angela will forward all info on signage, interpretive and guidance. Angela to forward Olmsted walking tour map. Action to solidify green corridor: Each of us will walk a whole area and make recommendations for how to best develop utilize, identifying what could be focused on, what is condition of sidewalk, trees, etc., are there any amenities... what's lacking and what needs to be addressed. Sections are:

Burrill to Humphrey to Fish House – Tania

Fish House along Puritan to Phillips Beach – Angela

Forest Ave, Walker to Humphrey – Richard

Burpee Road, Essex to Harold King Forest – Toni

Middlesex, to Ellis, to Monument, to Farragut, to Walker –Verena

Pleasant, to Humphrey, to Phillips Park, to Eismans –

Salem St, to Humphrey, to Ocean, to Atlantic + Palmer Road –

Ocean, to Shephard, to Atlantic, to Beach Bluff Ave – Sarah

Lawn organic program – Sara presented at SB Mar 18 meeting to confirm that (1) the Health Dept.'s policy on pesticides will be followed and enforced, (2) the town will no longer pay third party landscapers to use pesticides, and (3) the town will move forward with implementing an organic lawn care program. Peter Spellios stated he is convinced it is a health issue and should be addressed. Polly would be liaison. At end of meeting the path forward was not clear, perhaps Sara going to next BofH meeting. Might get drowned out due to Covid..... what should happen next. Trying to understand implementation on Bof H policy. Is it under the whim of those in Town Hall? Can it be followed and will it be followed. How do we enforce the policy?

Marzie says Gino is concerned that he'll be criticized that lawns look lousy the first year or two, doesn't know what to expect. How do we bridge understanding or expectation of what lawns should look like?

Action: The belief is that there is a public health policy in place and Gino/DPW must follow it. Are we still receiving funding for a policy that is not being followed? Do we have a champion at the BofH? Need clarity and communication. Marzie will update.

Tonight's meeting was originally scheduled for April 14, 2020 postponed until April 28, 2020 via zoom meeting.

Next meeting is Tuesday May 12, 2020 Via zoom

Angela moved to adjourn, Richard seconded. Adjourned at 8:48pm

Minutes taken by Angela Ippolito