

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Meeting – January 12, 2021

Members Present: Tania Lillak (Chair), Tonia Bandrowicz (Vice Chair), Verena Karsten, Richard Smith, Danielle Strauss (Recreation Director), (Molly O’Connell (Senior Planner), Angela Ippolito (Planning Board Rep), Sierra Muñoz, Michele Barden (incoming member)

Not present: Marzie Galazka

Public: Jim Smith, Paul Katz, Jan Pope, Gayle Stoll, Pei-Shan Lee, Laurel Jefferson

Meeting called to order at 7:07 by Tania Lillak.

Minute taker: Sierra Muñoz

1. Public Comment

Jim Smith: Concerns about current Johnson Park plan, access to beach. Two staircases on Eismans Beach are in bad condition; suggestion to make beach more accessible and improve safety and access. Concerned with draft plan and use for public concerts etc, concerned that the plan doesn’t meet the needs of the beach. Concerns about lights, Puritan Street access usability.

Paul Katz: Concerned about improvements being proposed; suggests raising the seawall before other improvements. Concerts would be unnecessary and disruptive; idea of stage or shell. Concerns about danger/potential projectiles in storm.

Ken Stoll: Submitted photos to Marzie of storm damage. Tania confirmed they were reviewed by committee. States that Gino says he is going to remove one of the trees. Supports current park usage, but has concerns about adding elements that need additional park maintenance

Laurel Jefferson: Seasonal resident, concerned with safety of accessing beach, ensure there aren’t projectiles (trees). Supports current park usage.

Jan Pope: Puritan Road residents; enjoy current usage of the beach, youth playing sports, but concerned about damage from winter storms. Supports leaving park open and minimal maintenance; supports previous commenters.

From Tania, Chair: There will be another open comment period at the next OSRPC meeting (Feb 9). Town website has project page with updates and information. Public should reach out to Marzie Galazka with additional comments.

2. Approval of December 8, 2020 Minutes: Committee unanimously voted to adopt the December 8 minutes. Sierra moved to accept, Toni seconded.

3. New business: Molly reports on 2020 plan revision: will be wrapping up plans and seeking approval for updated Open Space & Recreation Plan. Tania went before the Select Board with the draft plan in December; final plan will go to Select Board and Planning Board in February for approval and letters of support.

4. Hadley School Reuse Advisory Committee: Verena will be representative for Hadley Reuse Advisory Committee, will represent OSPRC. With scenario that Hadley is no longer used as elementary space, discussion of OSPRC committee concerns. Open space surrounds part of Hadley; boundary of open space is the wall. Danielle suggests community center, rec center, space to go outside, etc.

School building committee had proposed open space at Hadley, to replace open space loss at new school build. Suggests a hybrid model, remove annex of Hadley to add open space while still using some of building for community center. Toni suggests enhancements to open spaces next to Hadley to ensure public use. Conservation Commission has usage rules for spaces including Linscott Park.

Angela is Planning Board representative on the Hadley Reuse Committee; advocates for removal of annex and consideration of costs to bring building to usable conditions. Challenge will be business and usage plan.

Richard: historical perspective: would like to see original building restored. Suggests looking at Nahant Community Center, which is a renovated school.

5. Green Corridor Update: Toni connected with Gino to schedule a walk of the green corridor but that has been postponed.

6. Community Development:

Rail Trail: submitted a grant application for the 3rd segment of the rail trail (Humphrey to Middle School). This section abuts wetlands and so will go back to the ConCom to continue the Notice of Intent hearing, will notify all abutters and a public meeting notice will be posted.

Windsor Park: grant agreement has been signed. Town retained the services of NESRA engineering to work on the design. Will share draft plans with OSRPC committee and will hold a public meeting to seek addition comments.

Johnson Park: Committee received new design that was submitted by architects. Review of history. Designs have to go before Con Comm. Primary goal of committee is resiliency and climate change; not appropriate space to have elements that would be destroyed. Discussed in December meeting; committee is not in favor of arena, tables, etc.

Angela: original discussion of improvements focused on resiliency, storm berms and drainage corner are not in new plan, echoes concerns about trees and large items, lights, and concerts.

Richard described the bollard lights as being light pollution friendly. Rain garden was removed from the plan but was supported by OSRPC. Concerned about buffer plantings planned for seawall; will interrupt use. Concerned about decking, Tania stated that it should be permeable pavers and needs to be changed.

Reminder that DPW is in charge of funding and maintenance of stairs and beach access.

Discussion of OSRPC recommendations to architects from December 2020 meeting. Lifeguard chair is not included but needs to be on the plan – needs to be resilient or removable, possibly a fold up chair to chain to bike rack. Need to discuss footwash, drinking fountain, irrigation with planners and DPW – concerns about water access and resilience, maintenance. Footwash was high demand on public survey. Shade trees supported by public survey and some members of committee; not supported by other members; need to discuss what would be appropriate types of trees for the space. Trash and recycling not included in new plan. Danielle confirmed carry in/carry out has been effective this past summer and should continue.

7. School Building Committee: Last Sustainability Subcommittee focused on energy efficiency; presentation about utility incentive program. Upcoming meetings scheduled for community engagement, planning, submission to MSBA in Spring. Updated building design plans available on School Building Committee website.

8. Organic Lawn Management Update: No update.

Action Item: Tania will follow up on email to Allie about next steps.

9. Swampscott Conservancy: David Townsend, author about local trails, will be joining meeting. Working with Danielle on getting hikes and speakers.

10. Conservation Commission: Waiting for town response to Con Comm comments on rail trail. Will invite additional public comment for segment along middle school, near wetlands. Discussion of additional Comm projects including updates to by-laws, consultation for recommendations for beachside home to educate homeowners on resiliency and mitigation.

11. Historical Commission: Historical signage project is moving forward.

12. Planning Board: next meeting will review OSRPC draft plan. Proposal for Elm Place development near train station; mixed use, affordable housing, rail trail connector across Stetson Ave; public presentation over Zoom January 21st.

13. Recreation: Walks and outdoor events

14. Airtable Review: On agenda for February Meeting.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 9th, 7 pm

Adjournment: Motion by Angela, second by Sierra. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm