

Open Space Committee Minutes
Stow Town Building
1-16-19 7:30 pm

Present: Committee Members: Carole Sureau (chair), Bob Wilber, Bill Maxfield, Vin Antil, Greg Jackson, Eve Donahue, Ben Mast. Also Kathy Sferra (Conservation Coordinator).

Carole called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Minutes – The Committee approved the minutes of November 2018.

Golf Course Planning – The Committee reviewed the work done at the last meeting and the maps that were completed several years ago. Kathy noted that the Planning Board has decided that this project will be a priority for 2019 and is planning to create a small working group or committee to focus on it. There is a housing consultant already working for the town that may be able to spend some time on zoning bylaws. The current thinking is that at least one or two members of the Open Space Committee would participate. Kathy noted that there continues to be ideas floated for Stow Acres, but nothing definitive. The Melones are still committed to Stowaway. The group agreed to spend time on the maps at the next meeting. Vin will send the files to Kathy. Kathy will add any layers from the list of primary and secondary conservation areas from the recently updated PCD bylaw. The Committee thought that one way to tackle this would be to identify core conservation areas that should be set aside as open space with no development, and then these would be linked by more flexible open space and trail areas. It was noted that Open Space and Recreation Plan identifies a continuing need for ball fields and some thinking should be done on this as well. It was felt that some text should accompany the maps describing the methodology and the desired outcomes.

Emerald Necklace Mapping – The Committee reviewed the work done to date in the “West Stow” area, including the site visit done last year. Various ideas for crossing gaps in the trail network were discussed. Vin will follow up with Valerie to get the GPS track. Greg suggested looking at connections to other towns too.

Land Offer – Boxboro Road/Pilot Grove – The Committee discussed the offer of a parcel of land for open space or affordable housing purposes from Skip Warren. After discussion, the Committee agreed that the price was too steep for a small lot that does not have connections to other open space parcels. Kathy said that the Conservation Commission had voted similarly at their meeting this week.

Annual Report – Kathy and Carole will work on the Annual Report and bring to the next meeting.

Conservation Coordinator’s Report

- The 1:1 Analysis for 2018 is complete and appears to show no new development in 2018 (all home construction was tear down and rebuilt, and the condos at Regency

were counted in 2017). Six open space projects were completed totaling more than 200 acres – a recent record!

- Kathy noted the upcoming open space workshop in Acton in February and distributed a flyer.
- Kathy updated the group on the bid process for Town Center Park. The low bidder is being interviewed this week.
- The addition to Town Forest from J. Melone & Sons is in the works and should be completed in the next month.
- The developer of Hallocks Point seems interested in conveying Parcel X to the Conservation Commission and the Commission has agreed to accept it.

Next Meeting - The next meeting is February 13. The focus will be on the golf course planning work.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Approved 2/13/19
K. Spera

Open Space Committee Minutes
Town Building
2-13-19
7:30 pm

Present: Committee Members: Carole Sureau (chair), Bob Wilber, Vin Antil, Ben Mast
Absent: Bill Maxfield, Greg Jackson, Eve Donahue
Also Present: Kathy Sferra (Conservation Coordinator)

Carole called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Minutes – On motion by Bob, seconded by Vin, the Committee approved the minutes of January 2019.

Committee Membership – Both Eve Donahue and Carole Sureau have submitted letters of resignation from the Open Space Committee. It was noted that both have been very valuable members of the Committee during their respective terms. The positions will be posted. The Committee discussed others who might be interested in serving, with Bob noting that we should think about approaching people who have skills not currently represented by the members of the Committee. Carole will reach out to Bill and let him know that he will need to chair the March meeting, and the Committee will discuss who might want to serve as chair at the next meeting.

2018 Annual Report: The Committee reviewed a draft of the report prepared by Carole and Kathy and made several corrections. Vin moved to approve the report as amended, Bob seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Ben asked if the Committee has a list of goals or a workplan. It was noted that the Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a list of recommendations that the Committee uses as a guide, and revisits annually. Kathy offered to get Ben a copy of the plan. It was agreed that September is a good time of year to do this workplan review.

Conservation Coordinator's Report –

- Kathy noted that she and Laura Greenough are working with low bidder for Town Center Park to develop a timeline and payment schedule. He is eager to get started. She will follow up with the CPC and Selectmen and give them an update. It was noted that the gazebo may not be provided by the Lion's Club as previously thought. Kathy will follow up with Mike Busch. The merits of a gazebo vs. "bandstand" were discussed.
- Kathy also noted that there is renewed interest in discussions about the Assabet River Rail Trail. She is meeting with the new Director of the Assabet Wildlife Refuge tomorrow.

Emerald Necklace Planning – Vin noted that he had provided the GPS track of the field visit. Kathy missed this and will look for it and we will pick up the discussion next time.

Golf Course Planning – The Committee reviewed a map prepared by the Planning Department as well as previous work done at Stow Acres and Butternut. It was suggested that additional datalayers that would be helpful are the TNC resilient lands datalayer (contact Bob if we can't find it), and topographical contours. Vin suggested contour maps developed by NOAA. Also the SVT habitat datalayer which Kathy already has. The group discussed the desirability of robust corridors along the Assabet River and Elizabeth Brook, connected by a north-south corridor that could serve as a wildlife corridor and also provide a connector trail. Other issues needing further investigation are the viewshed to the Assabet

River, the viewshed from Route 62, and opportunities to connect to the Beyette and McDonald properties. It was thought to be desirable to have some open meadow habitat, recreational fields, and use of the land for agriculture/community gardens. The possibility of a skating pond was also noted. Kathy will bring additional maps and markers to the next meeting.

Community Preservation Projects – Vin noted that the CPC has a historic preservation project being proposed the Cemetery Dept. It has raised the issue of how open space is defined and whether that includes cemeteries. After reviewing the definition of open space in the statute it was generally agreed that cemeteries are not part of this. The distinction between restoration and maintenance was also discussed as it relates to past projects that have received funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Open Space Committee --Minutes
4-10-2019, 7:30 pm
Town Building

Present: Committee Members: Bill Maxfield, Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Ben Mast
Absent: Greg Jackson, Kathy Sferra

Vin called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Minutes - On motion by Bob, seconded by Bill, the Committee approved the minutes of March 2019.

Election of a new chair - It was decided to postpone the discussion without Greg Jackson. Until a new chair is elected, the meetings will be chaired by rotating acting chairs.

Golf Course Planning - Vin presented contour maps with one foot contours of Stow Acres south course. The map was shaded along the river to indicate the 'view in' to the golf course from the river. If the golf course were to be developed with houses, the idea of keeping the 'view in' protected was discussed.

Bob and Bill talked about the Golf Course Planning Session, held by the Planning Board on March 5th. The Planning Board is setting up a joint committee to look into the ramifications of development of any of the golf courses in town and how the Town might plan for such an event.

The issue of the 120 day 'Right of first refusal' by the Town was discussed and how hard it is to make plans and present them in a Town Meeting for a vote. The concept of having the joint committee propose a plan for development for one of the golf courses, based on the owners' intentions, and possibly using CPA monies to pay a consultant to draw up plans, might be a way of pro-actively protecting the interests of the Town and the impact of the development with respect to open space.

Kunelius Property - A discussion of the development of the Kunelius property with affordable housing was discussed. Bob indicated that SMAHT was on top of it and that he assumes there will be no more than six affordable units built on a portion of the property and the rest will remain as open space.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Minutes recorded by Bill Maxfield

Approved by vote of the Committee on 7-17-19

Open Space Committee –Minutes
7-17-2019, 7:30 pm
Town Building

Present: Committee Members: Bill Maxfield, Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Ben Mast, Greg Jackson
Also: Kathy Sferra

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Minutes: On motion by Bob, seconded by Ben, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of April 2019 as written.

Committee Composition: The Committee had a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of reducing the size of the Committee from seven to five, due to the existing vacancies. It was agreed to keep the Committee at seven for the time being, keep looking for members, and re-evaluate if it is difficult to get a quorum for regular meetings.

Election of Officers: Greg Jackson agreed to serve as chair for at least the next six months. Bob moved to elect Greg as Chair, Vin seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. Bob moved to elect Bill as Vice Chair, Greg seconded. The Committee discussed the role of this position and Ben offered to serve as Vice Chair. Bob withdrew his motion and Vin moved to elect Ben as Chair, Bill seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

CPC Representative: The Committee discussed the appointment of their Community Preservation Committee representative. Vin agreed to serve for another year. Bill moved to appoint Vin, Bob seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Golf Course Planning – The Committee discussed the Forum that was held this past Monday. Most of the members of the Committee were in attendance. It was noted that together Stow Acres and Butternut are likely one of the largest properties inside Route 495 and represent an extraordinary opportunity and also a huge threat. Various options were discussed, with some members feeling that it was important for the Town to try to gain site control and shape the outcome of the properties, with the most important areas set aside for conservation through purchase or a collaborative development approach. It was noted that it will be important to get a sense of what the owner would be willing to sell for. Kathy noted a project in Norwell that was done some time ago where the town stepped in, acquired the property, kept some for municipal uses, and issued an RFP for the development of the remainder. She will try to get more information on that project and also any similar projects that have been done by municipalities. It was also noted that information is needed on current school enrollment trends and the impact of new development. Kathy recommended that the Committee signal to the Planning Board that they would like to be full partners in this project as it unfolds. The Committee was in agreement.

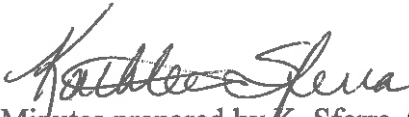
The Committee reviewed a summary of parcels adjacent to the golf courses that were thought to have conservation significance by staff and were generally in agreement that the parcels should be kept on the radar screen as the planning process unfolds.

Conservation Coordinator's Report: Kathy noted that the Kunelius Conservation Restriction is currently on the Secretary's desk for signature and should be done soon. She also noted that the Town is moving forward with the acquisition of an open space parcel in Harvard Acres at the request of the owners and working with Counsel and the owners to address some title issues. The property is nearby and flows into Delaney Wildlife Management Area.

Emerald Necklace Planning and Open Space and Recreation Plan Implementation Status: It was agreed to defer these agenda items to the next meeting.

Next Meeting: The Committee agreed to meet next on August 21st and September 18th. The meeting time will change to 7 pm. Kathy will not be in attendance at the August meeting, but can post the agenda. A member of the Committee will need to take notes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.


Minutes prepared by K. Sferra, Conservation Coordinator
Approved 9-18-19

Open Space Committee Minutes
9-18-19, 5:15 pm
Stow Town Building

Present: Greg Jackson (chair), Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Bill Maxfield. Also Kathy Sferra (staff).

Greg called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

Minutes

After review, Vin moved to approve the minutes of the July 2019 meeting as drafted. Bill seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Composition

The Committee agreed to defer any action on the idea of reducing the size of the Committee from 7 to 5. Greg has identified a few people who may be interested in serving and will encourage them to come to the next meeting.

Assabet River Access at Sudbury Road

Kathy was contacted by a resident asking if the Highway Dept could improve the access from Sudbury Road on the east side of the bridge. Kathy explained to him that this is private land. The Committee discussed the recommendation in the Open Space and Recreation Plan to secure this access via acquisition or easement. After discussion it was agreed that staff should reach out to the property owner and see if they might be interested in conveying a small parcel along the river to the Town. It was noted that this is a good put in spot and also that additional parking may be desirable for Track Road at some point. Ownership of the land would be preferable to an easement. Kathy will follow up with the owner.

Stow Acres

Kathy updated the Committee on staff's meeting with the property owner, Peter Brown, and his current thinking about the two golf courses. It was noted that Peter has offered to work with the Town to acquire the driving range property if the Town is interested. Kathy noted that the Rec Dept has expressed interest and the Conservation Commission discussed this last night and was interested in participating if that would be helpful, both to protect the wetland portion of the property and to secure a future access to the rear of the property. It is not known at this time if other boards may be interested. Bob expressed interest in a CR on the South Course and encouraged that these be thought about together. Bill thought it would be a shame if the views from Randall Road south were affected by the planned frontage lots on Randall Road. Bob noted the existence of enhanced Federal Tax Incentives which may be of interest to the owner. Bill thought the Town might leave the owner a single frontage lot at the driving range and buy the other four to save money. Vin thought three full size soccer fields could fit on the land. All agreed this would be a good property for ballfields given its history and characteristics. It was thought the Rec Dept should be the lead with this. Kathy explained the process from here for consideration by all boards and also noted that the property is in Chapter 61.

Town Center Park/Highrock Church

Kathy gave the group an update on the construction of the park and the tentative opening date of October 20th. Highrock Church has approached the Town about buying the church property. If the Town is not interested, they will put it on the market. Kathy clarified the existing right of way and parking arrangement for the park. It was agreed that reuse of the Church may be complicated, but it was also felt that it would be nice to secure a dedicated entrance and additional parking for the park. Vin offered to fill out the Chapter 61 "Quick Response" questionnaire for both of these properties.

Athens Lane/Emerald Necklace Trail Connections

Kathy updated the group on a recent meeting with Habitech to discuss the parcels currently owned by EFMC off Athens Lane. They would like to do a 66-unit AAN development on the parcel and have given the town a conceptual sketch plan. A zoning change would be needed and will be discussed with the Planning Board. Kathy indicated to the developers that the town was interested in a trail connection across the property and they thought it could be accommodated. It is unclear whether there will be a connection to the Quirk property, but Habitech has an interest in both.

Hallocks Point Subdivision

Kathy updated the Committee on this project which is now fully permitted by the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. A Chapter 61 withdrawal can be expected in the future.

Box Mill Road Bridge

Kathy updated the Committee on the planning process for the bridge and displayed the 25% design plans. She noted that the Town will be responsible for securing easements and right of way. There will be an impact on the Carver Hill CR. She is currently working with SCT and will be discussing this with EOEa.

At 6:45 pm, Bill Maxfield moved to adjourn. Bob seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting will be October 16, 2019.

Respectfully submitted



Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator

Approved 11-20-19

Open Space Committee Minutes
10-16-19, 7:30 pm
Stow Town Building

Present: Greg Jackson (chair), Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Ben Mast. Also Kathy Sferra (staff), Catherine Smits, resident.

Greg called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Minutes - Review of the September 2019 minutes was tabled until the next meeting as the wrong minutes were included in the packet.

Conservation Coordinator's Update— Kathy updated the group on her outreach regarding access to the Assabet River. No response has been received from the owner yet. She also updated the Committee on the Town's review of the offer to purchase High Rock Church and the Stow Acres Driving Range and the expressions of interest to date by various boards and departments. The Committee reviewed two parcels on opposite sides of Great Road that are being offered by a broker. The parcels are almost entirely wetland and left over from the sale of lots on Old Bolton Road. After discussion it was agreed that they are not conservation priorities for the Town.

Annual Review of Open Space Plan Implementation Status and Priorities – Committee members reviewed a list of actions from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, noting what has been completed, action items in progress, and things yet to be done. Items that the Committee focused on as needed short-term actions include:

- the need for a meeting of the Open Space Coordinating Council
- the apparent inactive status of the Agricultural Commission. It was suggested to reach out to Elena Coleman who was recently appointed to find out the status of the Commission's work. Bob noted that as Losing Ground has been updated and it is showing that a huge amount of farmland and forestland is being lost to solar development.
- the need for a master plan for open space in the southwest quadrant of Stow. It was suggested that this mapping exercise be a short term focus for the OS Committee.
- the completion of Town Center Park as a major accessibility initiative and the desire to complete two such projects. Bob suggested that Lucy Gertz from Mass Audubon might be willing to come and meet with the Committee. Kathy also noted that resident Mark Roberts has been exploring the trails recently and has some ideas about small improvements that might make a big difference. He has been talking with the Conservation Department.
- the status of improvements to Track Road – Kathy noted that this is currently under discussion by Complete Streets

Committee Composition - The Committee talked with Catherine Smits who may be interested in joining the Committee. The appointment process was discussed. Katherine will send a letter of interest. Vin moved to recommend Katherine's appointment to the Selectmen, Bob seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. It was also discussed that it is likely

time to do another "Tour De Stow" for the benefit of new members. We will discuss a date at the next meeting.

Meeting Time - The Committee agreed to hold meetings at 7 pm going forward, with a goal of getting out by 9 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for November 20th. Kathy will query the members about availability.

On a motion by Vin, seconded by Ben the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted



Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator

Approved 11-20-19

Open Space Committee Minutes
11-20-19, 7:00 pm
Pompositticut Community Center

Present: Greg Jackson (chair), Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Bill Maxfield. Also Kathy Sferra (staff); Natalie Forsythe, resident; Lucy Gertz, guest.

Greg called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Natalie introduced herself to the Committee and the members and staff introduced themselves to her. She may be interested in joining the Open Space Committee.

Minutes – After review, Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of 10-16-19 as amended. Vin seconded and the motion was approved 3-1 with Bill abstaining. Vin moved to approve the minutes of 9-18-19 as drafted. Bill seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Conservation Coordinator's Update:

- Kathy updated the group on the status of consideration of the High Rock Church parcel. An appraisal is currently in progress, funded with CPA Administrative funds. There is interest from Recreation, Library and Affordable Housing Committees.
- The Complete Streets Committee recently met with Rob Albright and had a good discussion about Track Road. The next step will be to put together a proposal for pre-engineering survey and wetland delineation services.
- The Planning Board recently met with a developer of several parcels of land on Athens Lane who are interested in amending the zoning bylaw to allow additional 55+ housing development. The Planning Board has asked to see the 'big picture' of what could happen on commonly controlled land there and seems interested in exploring a greater variety of housing options. The developer is aware of the town's interest in a recreational trail through that area.
- The Committee asked about the status of consideration of the Driving Range parcel at Stow Acres. Kathy has reached out to Laura at the Rec Dept to ask about this. Several members indicated that this property is a high priority.

Trail Accessibility Planning

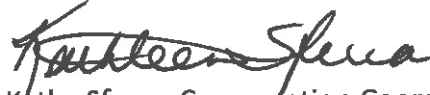
Lucy Gertz from Mass Audubon was present to describe the work that Mass Audubon has done on All Persons Accessibility. They take a holistic view of this, which includes not just trail design for physical accessibility, but also planning for cognitive, sight and hearing impairments. They use Forest Service trail design standards for accessibility. She noted that one in five people has a permanent or temporary disability in his or her lifetime. Mass Audubon's approach to accessibility also includes transportation, customer services, materials in multiple formats, information available in advance, and outreach. They involve users in the design process, getting their feedback on design and construction as it progresses. Seating is important as is the ability of trail users to be as independent as possible. Lucy displayed photographs of many

of the trails, samples of signage and materials, audiotours, and shared a short video. Committee members were impressed by the approach, and also noted that such a comprehensive approach may be difficult for a Town. Kathy noted that resident Mark Roberts has also expressed interest in accessibility and recently visited Town Forest with Conservation Department staff to show areas where some minor changes might make accessibility easier.

Other Business – Given the hour, the remainder of business on the agenda was deferred to the next meeting on December 18, 2019 at 7 pm.

On a motion by Vin, seconded by Bob the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kathy Sferra".

Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator

Approved 12-18-19 by unanimous vote

Open Space Committee Minutes
12-18-19, 7:00 pm
Stow Town Building

Present: Greg Jackson (chair), Vin Antil, Bob Wilber (late), Bill Maxfield, Ben Mast. Also Kathy Sferra (staff); Natalie Forsythe, resident.

Greg called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

Minutes

After review, Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of 11-20-19 as drafted. Vin seconded and the motion was approved 3-1 with Ben abstaining.

Conservation Coordinator's Update

Kathy updated the group on the PFAS drinking water contamination meeting recently held by DEP and the status of the private well testing.

CPA Proposals

Kathy distributed the proposals that have been submitted to CPC for open space/recreation projects for Annual Town Meeting in May 2020. These include: Track Road Survey and Design, Acquisition of High Rock Church, Acquisition of the Stow Acres Driving Range, and play area improvements at Town Center Park. She summarizes the proposals and the amount requested. Vin noted that proposals have also been received from SMAHT for affordable housing design at the former Kunelius property on Red Acre Road, and for work on the old Town Hall.

Bob Wilber arrived

The Committee discussed the four proposals. Overall they had a concern that there are a number of buildings in the center of Stow and that there needs to be a plan for how they will be used, noting Town Hall, the Old Fire Station, Randall Library, and High Rock Church. Members wondered a Teen Center entailed and if it could be located in any of the already available space. It was noted that Pompo doesn't work for this use as it is too far from the school. They also wondered if the Library and Recreation Depts. could share the space. They also noted the desirability of controlling the access/parking at Town Center Park. The Committee did not take a position on this proposal, feeling that more information is needed including a cohesive plan for the property and other buildings in the center of Stow. Kathy noted that it is expected that there will be a Selectmen's meeting on this topic in January which may provide further information.

The Driving Range would be desirable to protect, but members wondered about the site and whether or not it is too wet to support ballfields. Kathy noted that the Conservation Commission has approved the wetland delineation. Fill could be brought in outside of wetlands but this would make the project more expensive. It was noted that this question is likely to be

raised at Town Meeting and also affects the buildability of the lot for residential purposes. Bill wanted to talk to Ben Poulsen and get his opinion, but Kathy encouraged him to let her follow up with Laura and see what her thinking is on this issue and how we might get more information on field design and viability for Town Meeting. She will also ask the owner if perc test data is available and also look at recent sales of single family lots for price information. The Committee was not ready to take a position on this project yet. Though they were generally supportive, they felt that they needed more information.

The Committee was supportive of the Track Road and Town Center Park projects.

CPC will be meeting with project proponents in January.

Discussion – Next Steps with Accessibility and Master Planning for SW Stow

This discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

Site Visit/Tour

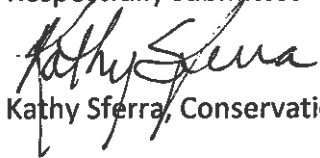
It was agreed to do this in March. Kathy asked that everyone look at the list and let her know what destinations they would like to see, and identify any new sites.

Meeting Schedule for 2020 – Given conflicts around the 3rd Wednesday, the Committee agreed to move their regular meetings to the 4th Wednesday. Kathy will prepare an updated list.

Natalie said she was planning to submit a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen.

On a motion by Bill, seconded by Vin the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm by unanimous vote. The next meeting will be January 22nd.

Respectfully submitted



Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator

Approved with amendments – 1/22/2020