

Open Space Committee Minutes
1-27-2021, 7:00 pm
**Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing during Governor's Declaration of Emergency/
Modification to the Open Meeting Law**

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Meg Costello
Bill called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

Minutes - Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/09/2020 as written. Kathy seconded and the motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

1:1 Development and Open Space Analysis for 2020 – Kathy presented preliminary results for 2020 and explained the historical reason for the analysis. She has not quite finished the analysis, but it appears that no land was protected in 2020 and only a few acres were developed. There were only 2 news houses built in Stow during 2020, the others were demo and reconstruction. Overall Stow is still ahead in the protection to development ratio.

Track Road Update – Kathy updated the group on the work recently done by a consultant to the Town to develop a survey of Track Road, along with a conceptual plan for what improvements might look like. Various ideas were discussed including Bill's suggested for a parallel route within the Assabet River Refuge that would access Crow Island, the purchase of Crow Island by the USFWS, and making it a one way road. Work on this effort will continue.

Conservation Coordinator Update – Kathy updated the group on various pending projects including Harvard Acres Open Space, Hallock Point, Stow Acres, Athens Lane and Merrill. It was suggested that there might be a term restriction on Merrill. Kathy will look into this.

CPC Bonding – Bob and Kathy updated the group on recent discussions with regard to bonding.

Committee Vacancies – It was noted that there are still two vacancies on the Committee.

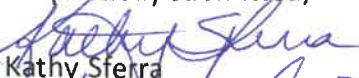

Annual Report – The Committee reviewed and approved the 2020 Annual Report. Kathy will submit to the Selectmen's office.

2021 Meeting Schedule – The group reviewed and approved a 2021 meeting schedule. The next meeting is February 24th. The agenda will include a review of the Community Preservation Plan.

Federal/State Land Acquisition Goals – Bob mentioned that President Biden was coming out with a plan to conserve 30% of the US by 2030 called the 30x30 plan. Some state governors are setting similar goals. Massachusetts is currently at 27%.

Adjournment – At 8:25 Kathy moved to adjourn, Bob seconded and the motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra


Open Space Committee Minutes

2-24-2021, 7:00 pm

Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing during Governor's Declaration of Emergency/ Modification to the Open Meeting Law

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Meg Costello

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

Minutes - Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/27/2021 as written. Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

CPC Update – Vin updated the group on a meeting that CPC held with the Selectmen the prior evening. He said that it had gone well and that the Selectmen understood of the CPC's role and challenges. He felt that they had provided useful guidance with regard to the relative priority of the Stow Acres and Town Hall projects, as well as on bonding. The consensus seemed to be to wait on the Town Hall project, and not to bond against CPA revenue. He has asked the Town Hall Committee to explore whether the project can be phased to spread the cost over time. He also noted that there is a consensus that something should be done but that more outreach and a better funding plan are needed. He noted that CPC revenue this year totaled \$949K. The group discussed the excellent response to the Stow Acres presentation in town. Bill clarified the terms of the plan and the Phase 1 and Phase 2 purchases. Vin noted that the CPC hasn't vote on it yet, but his sense is that the Committee is supportive and understands that the project is time sensitive. Bob said that a large CPA match was likely in 2021. Kathy noted that the question and answer document should be done next week and that Mark O'Hagan was continuing work to advance his development concept.

Community Preservation Plan – This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

Conservation Coordinator Update – Kathy updated the group on her research into the term restriction on the Merrill property. There is no conservation restriction but there is a covenant on the land, of which the Planning Board is aware. Meg noted that the Planning Board is currently discussing this project. Kathy updated the group on fundraising for Hallock Point. She also noted that Alan DiPietro's property on Maple Street is now on the market. She noted that the Planning Board is working on zoning changes for the Athens Lane development. Meg said that a meeting is coming up with the developers. Lastly, Kathy noted that BOSE's property is on the market. Bill noted that it would be nice to have a conservation restriction-like restriction that would work for property owners with a single lot they would like to give up. Meg asked about the status of the Spring Hill deed and trail construction on the property. Kathy indicated that the deed is approved and about to be recorded. She needs to talk with the developer's attorney about the trail, however there are some challenges with the connection to Hale-Corzine given the terrain. There is an easement off Walcott Street. The trail should also be considered in the larger picture of Athens Lane and Hemenway Farm.

Next Meeting – March 24 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment – At 8:15 Bob moved to adjourn, Vin seconded and the motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra



Open Space Committee Minutes
4-26-2021, 7:00 pm
**Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing during Governor's Declaration of Emergency/
Modification to the Open Meeting Law**

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Meg Costello, Vin Antil
Also: Liz Beck (appointed, but not sworn in), Cortni Frecha

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm and welcome new member Liz Beck.

Minutes - Vin made a motion to approve the February minutes as drafted. Bob seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Hallock Point - Liz has not been sworn in yet, but stepped out the conversation as an abutter. Kathy gave an update on the Hallock Point acquisition project. The Selectmen are holding a hearing tomorrow night on whether or not to exercise the town's right of first refusal. The Committee is very aware of the details of the project. Bob stressed the good value that the town is getting. After discussion, Vin moved to urge the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to exercise their right of first refusal and endorse the warrant article for Hallock Point. Bob seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote. Bill will attend the BOS meeting and speak to this. Liz rejoined following the vote.

Stow Acres Update - Bob updated the group on the project, noting the background and history of this project and the vision for the future of the golf courses. He showed one of the house plans that has been developed by developer Mark O'Hagan and noted the diversity of housing types and sizes being considered. He summarized the costs anticipated for the project and noted the linkage between the vision for the north and south courses.

Community Preservation Update – Vin summarized the projects being considered and noted that the pickleball court proposed at Town Center Park has become an issue. This is still under discussion with the Recreation Commission and the CPC. The Committee discussed the project and there was concern about the visual intrusiveness the court and fencing might have at Town Center Park and the desirability of building the court in a location where two courts could be accommodated should pickleball prove popular. The Committee did not vote on this issue. Bill said he would convey the Committee's thoughts to the Recreation Director.

Community Preservation Plan – This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

Conservation Coordinator Update – There were no other updates.

Next Meeting – May 26, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment – At approximately 8:30 pm Bob moved to adjourn, Vin seconded and the motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote (5-0).

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra

Approved 6/23/21

Open Space Committee Minutes

6-23-2021, 7:00 pm

Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing during Governor's Declaration of Emergency/ Modification to the Open Meeting Law

Present: Vin Antil, Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Meg Costello

Absent: Bill Maxfield

Also Liz Beck (appointed but not sworn in)

Vin called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm.

Minutes - After review, Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of April 2021. Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Community Preservation Committee Appointment – Vin indicated he is willing to continue to serve as the Committee's representative to the CPC although he would like to step down as chair. Bob noted that he has done an excellent job over the past few years. Kathy moved to appoint Vin as the Open Space Committee's representative, Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Project Updates:

Hallock Point – Kathy updated the group on the Hallock Point project. The ANR plan for 2 lots has been prepared and submitted to the Planning Board for their endorsement on 6-29-21. The potential litigation with the abutters has been resolved through agreement to convey an easement around the shed area. Fundraising is complete. The closing is set to occur in July.

Stow Acres – Bob updated the group on Stow Acres and the overwhelmingly positive vote at Town Meeting. He said that the team is currently working on the Conservation Restriction for the South Course and on developing a plan for the North Course. Kathy reported on a recent site visit to the driving range by several members of the team, Conservation Commission and the MA Division of Ecological Restoration to talk about restoration of wetlands at the driving range.

Joanne Drive – Kathy reported on this 26 acre parcel which is due to be conveyed to the Conservation Commission as part of the subdivision off Forest and Sudbury Road. She noted that it has a nice overlook on the Assabet River and will have a trail.

Community Preservation Plan – Vin noted that the CPC is having a meeting to talk about the next Community Preservation Plan in July. Kathy encouraged everyone to attend. Vin said that he would share a copy of the plan with the Committee and also thought it might be on the website.

Open Space Plan Implementation - Kathy shared the most recent copy of the implementation status document, noting that a new plan will need to be completed in 2023. Most members had not yet had a chance to review it, so it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

Next Meeting – The Committee discussed the next meeting date and agreed to meet on July 21 if that works for Bill Maxfield. The meeting will be via Zoom.

Adjournment – Kathy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Kathy Sferra in blue ink.

Kathy Sferra

Handwritten signature and date "Approved 7/21/21" in blue ink.

Open Space Committee Minutes
7-21-2021, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

Present: Bill Maxfield, Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Meg Costello; Absent: Vin Antil, Liz Beck.
Also: Laurie Burnett (interested in Committee), Dorothy Granat.

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Laurie Burnett introduced herself and explained her interest in the Open Space Committee. The Committee explained how to go about applying for the open seat.

Minutes - After review, Meg made a motion to approve the minutes of June 2021. Kathy seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Project Updates:

Hallock Point – Kathy updated the group on the Hallock Point project. The Town has acquired the property and is waiting to convey the two development lots to Kendall Homes. She is also working on a conservation restriction to be conveyed to Stow Conservation Trust. Trail planning has begun and the plan is to have a couple of picnic tables and a boat pull up at the tip of the Point. She is also looking to remove the phone and cable lines at the tip of the Point.

Stow Acres – Bob updated the group on Stow Acres and said that members of the team are currently in discussion with Stow Acres regarding the North Course. Bill wondered if a road right of way can extend through Butternut and Bob indicated that the trail is being designed with the possibility of a trail extension.

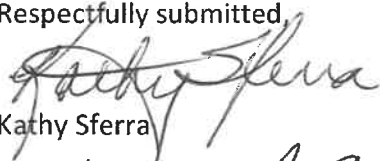
Community Preservation Update – Vin was not present, but Kathy noted that the Committee held a public hearing on the plan and made only a couple of minor changes.

Open Space Plan Implementation - Kathy noted in response to a question that the plan will expire in 2023. The 2022 Action items include beginning the process of updating the plan. Bill noted that he has a friend with a drone if that would be helpful. Laurie said that access to open space was an issue of interest to her. Kathy distributed the updated implementation update document. Bill suggested having this discussion in person at the September meeting.

Next Meeting – The Committee discussed the next meeting date and agreed to meet on August 25th only if necessary, but otherwise in person on September 22nd.

Adjournment – Kathy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm, Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted


Kathy Sferra

Approved 9-23-21

Open Space Committee Minutes
9-22-2021, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Kathy Sferra, Vin Antil, Liz Beck. Absent: Meg Costello Bob Wilber
Also: Laurie Burnett (appointed, but not yet sworn in).
Bill called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Minutes - After review, Kathy made a motion to approve the minutes of August 2021. Vin seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Project Updates:

Hallock Point – Kathy updated the group on Hallock Point. Conveyance of the two development lots should occur shortly – within the next couple of weeks. Conservation Dept. staff are beginning the process of developing the property for public use including trails, removal of old cable wires, signage, etc. She noted that development of the new trails on Kunelius needs to be finished first, and should be in the next week or so.

Stow Acres – Kathy updated the group on Stow Acres and the agreement that has been reached on the North Course. She noted that the South Course CR is in progress. There will be a public forum on 10/13 and Town Meeting on 10/30. Vin added that CPC has voted to support contribution of \$2.5 million subject to town meeting vote. Selectmen, CPC and Fin Comm all appear extremely supportive. Bill made a motion that the Open Space Committee support the agreement that has been reached and noted the significance of this project to the protection of open space in Stow. Vin seconded and the motion was approved unanimously on a 4-0 vote. Bill or another member will address Town Meeting.

Community Preservation Update – Vin noted the Stow Acres vote. Also the Committee is currently evaluating its project review process. He reviewed the CPA financials.

Open Space Plan Implementation - Kathy noted that the plan will expire in 2023; and work on an update will need to begin in 2022. She explained how the development of the plan has happened in the past and the relationship between the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission on this. Laurie noted that she was interested in the issue of affordable housing and open space; and in the issue of accessibility to open space and communities amenities including sidewalks and cycling. The relationship of the Open Space Plan and the Master Plan were also discussed. It was suggested that members go through the spreadsheet of action items looking for those items that are assigned to the OSC, or those items that still need to be done to focus on in the next year. Some ideas that came up included “telling our story” better with regard to housing and open space collaboration, additional accessibility projects, and continued trail planning.

Next Meeting – The Committee discussed the next meeting date and agreed to meet on October 27th. Kathy said she wanted to bring the Chapter 61 list – highlighting those not re-enrolling. Bill suggested doing the Open Space priorities discussion first.

Adjournment – Vin moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm, Kathy seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra

Approved by unanimous vote on 11-18-2021

Open Space Committee Minutes
11-18-2021, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Kathy Sferra, Laurie Burnett, Meg Costello Bob Wilber
Absent: Vin Antil, Liz Beck

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm.

Minutes - After review, Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of September 2021 with minor amendments. Laurie seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Stow Acres – Bill noted last night’s Stow Conservation Trust Annual Meeting and the presentation on the successful Special Town Meeting vote on the second phase of this project. It was noted that the Town and Trust will together need to find just over \$1 million in additional funds through grants and fundraising. Kathy said that there are multiple funding needs after the acquisition including funding for a master plan for the property and for wetland restoration design and construction, along with funding for construction of recreational facilities. This is likely to be a major focus for the coming years. The hope is to have a unified vision for the whole property that includes conservation and recreation and is uniquely Stow in nature. It will be helpful to look at other large projects. Bob suggested the Hayden Complex in Lexington. Kathy is currently working on a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application for \$750,000.

Chapter 61 Non-Renewals

Kathy noted that she is aware of three properties that have not renewed Chapter 61 status including one acre that she owns at the corner of Boxboro and West Acton, the Ward property off Taylor Road, and a portion of the north course at Stow Acres. Of these, portions of the Ward property are of interest for addition to Marble Hill. She has talked with the property owners previously and will reach out to them.


Open Space and Recreation Plan Update and Implementation - The Committee again discussed the priorities for actions in the coming year, including the fact that the update process for the Open Space and Recreation Plan will need to begin in the coming year so that the plan is completed by March 2023 when the current plan expires. Kathy noted that there is a good opportunity for tie-in with the Stow Acres Master Planning – in terms of the needs assessment that will need to be done. Committee members agreed that there should be another community survey undertaken, and also that the Plan is solid and just needs updating. The Conservation Commission will determine how it would like to proceed with the Plan update, and the need to coordinate with the Town’s Master Plan Update. Different models for preparing the plan have been used in the past. Priorities discussed include viewing the plan through a sustainability/climate/greening/resilience lens, the importance of connectivity for both people and wildlife (including Complete Streets, Emerald Necklace Trail, etc., and land and

water restoration opportunities. Other priorities discussed by the Committee include supporting the vision in the Stow Acres Concept Plan as development plans proceed with ZBA permitting. It was agreed that the town needs assessment could begin shortly, and feed into the Open Space and Recreation Plan update. Coordination with the Recreation Commission and Department will be needed. The capabilities of the town's new aerial mapping service, NearMap were displayed for the Committee, and it was agreed that this may be helpful for the OSRP Plan Update.

Next Meeting – The Committee discussed the next meeting date and agreed to meet on December 15th.

Adjournment – Kathy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, Bill seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra
Approved 1-26-22