

Open Space Committee Minutes
1-26-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

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

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes - After review, Meg made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/18/21 as drafted. Bill seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Athens Lane – Kathy reported on a site visit that the Planning Department organized with the developer of Athens Lane to look at the areas proposed for development and conservation. Several people were unable to attend and the developer has offered to hold another visit. Kathy displayed maps of the proposed development and of the areas that she felt were the highest priorities for open space and said that they had discussed the goal of having most of the open space be a contiguous block to the west side of the site, rather than scattered throughout the development. She also noted that the developer felt that he could accommodate connector trails north-south through the development to connect Arbor Glen with Hale/Corzine. Meg mentioned she would like to see a shelter for public transit at Hudson Road. Bill noted the goal of having a connector road to the north. Kathy said she did not think that was possible, but that this was an issue for the Planning Board. Kathy felt it was most likely that SCT would hold the open space and said that she hoped that Bob could meet with the developer on site and weigh in early. Bill wrapped up saying that he hopes the Open Space Committee can support the Planning Board's efforts to ensure high quality open space.

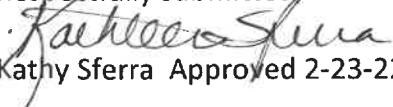
Stow Acres – Kathy updated the group on Stow Acres, noting that the protection of the South Course by conservation restriction was completed in December. The purchase and sales agreement for the North Course is still being negotiated and she is working on an application for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant for \$1 million for the acquisition with additional funding in a second year for master planning for the North Course that would include conservation, recreation and restoration. Also the LIP applications have been submitted for the development to the Select Board and will be on their agenda for February 8th.

Open Space and Recreation Plan – Kathy indicated that the Conservation Commission had begun the process of updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan and that she and Laura Greenough will have a working group to assist with that effort. They are currently compiling surveys and recent plans from relevant towns. The goal is for this to be a one-year process. She said that she thinks it would be helpful to have a new map showing parcels important for resilience and climate change. There are some good resources for this and she asked the Committee to think about taking the lead with this. It was agreed to focus on this at the next meeting. Laurie mentioned that she had gone to some interesting MAPC workshops about community outreach and engagement and offered to follow up with Kathy about ideas that had been presented.

Annual Report for 2021 - After review, Meg moved to approve a draft annual report prepared by Bill. Kathy seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Adjournment – The meeting ended at 8:15 pm due to the loss of a quorum.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra Approved 2-23-22

Open Space Committee Minutes
2-23-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

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

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

Minutes - After review, Vin made a motion to approve the minutes of 1-26-22 as drafted. Laurie seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (6-0) on a roll call vote.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey – The Committee reviewed a draft of the survey being prepared to get community input as part of the process of updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Members offered comments and suggestions on specific questions. Kathy will revised the draft and review with Laura Greenough and the members of the working group that are helping with the plan update.

Mapping of Lands Important for Climate Resilience – Kathy showed slides with climate mapping information that has been prepared by Mass Audubon and The Nature Conservancy and said that she hoped that one of the projects that the Committee might take on in the coming year was to prepare another townwide map identifying key parcels based on statewide mapping and local knowledge. The Committee said they were interested in doing this. The challenge of identifying parcels important for climate was noted – should we be looking at the resilient places or the fragile ones, and what is the role of ecological management and connectivity. Bob noted that BioMap 3 will be coming out soon and also suggested looking at the UMass CAPS data. He offered to invite Jeff Collins and Maggie Wernaburg from Mass Audubon to the meeting on March 23rd. Kathy said that she would send the links to the various data sources.

CPA Update – Vin reported on the work of the Community Preservation Committee over the past few months. They have recommended \$1 million in funding for the Library and up to \$1.1 million for the Red Acre Housing Development. The Town Hall project was not approved at this time. Vin said that CPC is interested in doing some financial projections for future projects. He noted that he will step down as chair in the coming year.

Athens Lane Update – Bob updated the group on a recent site visit to the Athens Lane development site with Jesse Steadman and Bruce Wheeler, the developer. Overall, he feels like they are on the right track with the open space layout. Kathy expressed her hope that SCT would own this open space given its proximity to Hale/Corzine. She explained the evolving plans and the locations that Planning and Conservation Departments have suggested revisions to Bruce Wheeler. Bill expressed a desire to see a second means of access through BOSE. Kathy does not think this is possible and will send a map to Bill.

Stow Acres Update – Kathy indicated that the P&S and Lease agreement for the North Course are still being negotiated with Stow Acres. Also the town has gotten helpful feedback from Municipal Vulnerability grant program staff on the Stow Acres project and will be working on a grant application for submittal this spring.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm on a motion by Bob, seconded by Bill and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Sferra (Approved unanimously 3-23-22)

Open Space Committee Minutes
3-23-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

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

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

Minutes - After review, Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of 2-23-22 as drafted. Vin seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Options for Connecting Stow Acres Trails from Surrounding Neighborhoods - The Committee discussed possibilities for connecting trails on the Stow Acres South Course to nearby neighborhoods like Gleasondale. A map of the area was viewed. It was agreed that the Beyette property is important to making this connection. Both Kathy and Bob have talked with them in the past about land conservation options. It was agreed that nothing needs to be done at this time. Kathy also noted the significance of some of the remaining parcels owned by Roger Kane. She is planning to reach out to him.

Bill arrived and took over as chair.

Mapping of Lands Important for Climate Resilience – Guests: Maggie Werneburg and Jack Nessen – Maggie and Jack work for Mass Audubon and were invited by Bob to talk about using GIS mapping to plan for resilience. After introductions, Maggie talked about the elements of resilience, including reducing stressors, restoring natural systems, increasing habitat diversity, and increasing connectivity. She highlighted the issues of drought, strong storms, and extreme temperatures identified in the town's Municipal Vulnerability Plan and talked about land protection can help address these issues – like protecting groundwater recharge areas and forest habitat. She talked about prioritizing parcels using factors like landscape diversity, connectivity and intact habitat. Jack developed an online GIS tool for Stow which he displayed for the group -- showing a variety of data layers -- and said he could keep this active online for the town's use. They summarized the datalayers available. Jack showed online GIS slides highlighting the opportunity at Stow Acres – including protection of wetlands and flood storage and enhancing these areas along with wildlife habitat. He also noted the north-south connectivity potential in this area. The Committee reviewed the information, discussed restoration of parcels like farms and golf courses, and discussed next steps. It was noted that the Committee could reach out to Jeff Ritterson re Mass Audubon's Climate Smart Forestry Program. Meg spoke about the importance of gathering anecdotal natural history information, and Laurie about sound and places with quiet. Bob talked about a wildlife corridor mapping project done in the Berkshires and the importance of regional connectivity. It was agreed to continue this mapping effort at the next meeting – looking in more depth at parcels that are important for connectivity, and mitigating strong storms, extreme temperatures and drought on a quadrant scale. Kathy said she would try to find the Wiki mapping work that was done as part of the Complete Streets exercise. Laurie noted the potential for community engagement through students.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm on a motion by Meg, seconded by Bill and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Sferra
Kathy Sferra

Approved by unanimous vote 5-25-22

Open Space Committee Minutes
5-25-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

Present: Bill Maxfield (chair), Kathy Sferra, Laurie Burnett, Meg Costello

Absent: Liz Beck, Vin Antil, Bob Wilber,

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

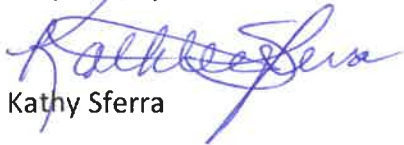
Minutes - After review, Meg made a motion to approve the minutes of 3-23-22 as drafted. Laurie seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (4-0) on a roll call vote.

Mapping of Lands Important for Climate Resilience

Kathy explained how the maps in the Open Space and Recreation Plan were developed and how they are structured. From her perspective the goal is to develop another map showing lands important for climate resilience. The Committee has discussed two needs – mapping of lands with ecological significance in terms of resilience, and also mapping connections for residents to access open lands and other destinations. Kathy displayed a series of powerpoint slides and a web application developed by Mass Audubon, focusing on the Southeast Quadrant of Stow where some of the areas of highest biodiversity are located. She noted that Malcolm Ragan, Stow's Assistant Planner and GIS coordinator, has been working to re-create this web app on the Town's online GIS so that we can adapt it for continued use. She also noted that the "Wiki" maps showing public input with regard to bike/pedestrian connections is still online on the Complete Streets website and can be reviewed for ideas about connections and other improvements that might be included in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Committee reviewed the maps in detail and discussed the parcels that were highlighted in a variety of datalayers, making a list of properties that might be shown on the map. Highlighted were the importance of the Melone land and adjacent lands off White Pond Road, Crow Island, the Elizabeth Brook corridors, some of the lowlands at Honeypot and in Gleasondale. Kathy noted that the open space for Joanne Drive will be coming to the Conservation Commission shortly. The difficulties with creating public access along the west/north side of the Assabet River were noted. The Committee asked Kathy to put together a map for the next meeting showing the parcels that had been highlighted. The Committee will continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm on a motion by Meg, seconded by Bill and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra

Approved unanimously 7/13/22

Open Space Committee Minutes
7-13-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

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

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes - After review, Meg made a motion to approve the minutes of May 25, 2022 as drafted. Bill seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Reorganization – Chair, CPC Rep – Bill indicated that he was willing to continue to be chair. There were no other takers and all agreed they were supportive of Bill continuing. Vin indicated that he is willing to continue as the Community Preservation Committee representative, but is hoping to step down as chair. Kathy moved to designate Vin at the Committee's CPC Representatives, Meg seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0).

Land Project Update – Kathy updated the group on recent activities. The Stow Acres North Course P&S was approved by the Select Board on Tuesday night. Trails have been finished at Assabet Overlook (Joanne Drive) and Hallock Point. The second section of the Red Trail at Carver Hill has also been completed.

Bob arrived during the previous discussion

Community Preservation Plan – Vin noted that the Committee is looking for feedback and updates on the Plan. Kathy shared recent minor edits from the Conservation Commission. Vin will look at these and bring a revised draft to the next meeting.

Cottages at Wandering Pond – Athens Lane

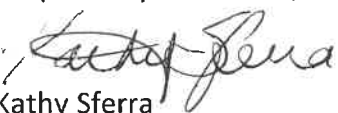
The Committee discussed comments on the plans submitted to the Planning Board. The first hearing will be August 2nd. Comments were noted in the areas of traffic, open space, and trails. Kathy will draft a brief letter for Bill to send for the first meeting. Kathy and Bob agreed that it would be helpful to have a more in-depth meeting with the applicant to discuss open space ownership and trail issues.

Mapping of Lands Important for Climate Resilience

Vin displayed a recent map prepared by the Planning Department highlighting the parcels important for resilience in the Southeastern Quadrant of Stow, summarizing the discussion at the last meeting. Board members agreed to review the map between now and the next meeting. Vin explained how to use the online GIS system. The Committee will continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm on a motion by Laurie, seconded by Meg and approved unanimously (6-0) on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Sferra

Approved unanimously by OSC 8-24-22

Open Space Committee Minutes
8-24-22, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely via Zoom Webconferencing

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

Absent: Liz Beck

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Review/ Approval of Minutes: Meg suggested a minor correction to the minutes which was agreeable to the group. Meg moved to approve the minutes as amended. Bill seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0)

OSRP Survey Update

- Currently, 157 responses have been received for the Survey.
- Information regarding the survey has been included in the Stow Independent
- CC has put a QR code at town property entrances.
- Efforts were made to reach out to the under 18 and 18-24 age groups.
- Laurie will follow up with the High School.
- Kathy will send out another reminder for responses prior to closure of the survey on 9/15.
- Physical copies distributed to the library and COA.

Committee Organization Discussion:

- Meg will take the minutes for future meetings.
- Liz Beck will resign due to new commitments.
- The September meeting will be in person on 9/28/22- Kathy will reserve a room.

Mapping of Lands Important for Resilience

- Reviewed Northeast Corner climate resilience map.
- Identified prioritizing options for resilience for wildlife corridors.
- Identified riverways as a highway for wildlife to move between micro-climates.
- Determined that Regency at Stow conservation land that is not noted on the map.
- Determined there are possibilities worth considering that utilize the Regency Land to connect Flagg hill with Marble Hill.
- Discussed Morey Lands as valuable for water retention and draining and as key to habitat movement.
- Discussed properties with Conservation Restrictions as facilitating opportunities for wildlife movement and supporting our climate resiliency goals. Include these on the climate resiliency maps so they can inform our conversations.
- Properties identified as important to resiliency also include:
 - Great pine swamp
 - Pilot Grove Farm
 - Mansfield property
 - Parcels around Ministers Pond
 - Canterbury Lane

Additional Updates:

- CPC is looking to have a public forum to react to the CPC plan. The goal of the meeting is for the CPC is to get information from the community about what is coming down the pipeline. Oct 17th is the likely date for the forum. It was agreed to add discussion on the OSC recommendations to the agenda for our next meeting.
- Meg's requested more information regarding the MBTA planning. Kathy will see if Malcolm can speak at our next meeting.

Adjournment:

Vin makes a motion to end the meeting. Bill seconded. Approved unanimously on roll call vote.

Approved unanimously 10-12-22 FSferra

Open Space Committee Minutes October 12, 2022

Conducted in-person at Town Building

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

Absent: Liz Beck, Laurie Burnett

Meeting began at 7:10pm with quorum

Review/Approval of Minutes: Vin made motion to accept August minutes as written with no changes. Bob Wilbur seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

Open Space and Recreation Survey results were passed out as 9 page written document. Kathy noted response totals: initial goal was to achieve 300 responses. Final count was 402 responses. Some hardcopy responses were submitted, which were more difficult to document. Early results indicated fewer responses from the less than 24 years old group; push to reach this group was attempted. Fully one quarter of respondents lived in Stow less than 5 years. Half had children in the home.

Comments/observations:

- Platform used for survey was Google Forms
- Vin suggested he was interested in the breakdown of boat related responses: who fished, motor boated, canoed/kayaked.
- Discussion of people with kids: how did having kids affect survey responses?
- Kathy noted that wording issues affected responses---number of answers allowed via electronic survey vs hardcopy answers that allowed more than the number for electronic answers
- Bob commented on current cultural philosophy of "doing what want/individual" instead of community consciousness for public "good".
- Discussion of dog owner/leashing on public properties

Committee then looked at large maps of Stow property breakdown, finalizing properties worth pursuing for Conservation Restrictions, water, flora and fauna corridors. Group noted that north/south corridor is strong throughout the town layout. Group then went back to view east/west on northern section of Stow. Group marked printed map, indicating properties to be considered for conservation/CR requests.

Discussion of Conservation Restrictions being in perpetuity. Bob and Kathy both had strong feelings about no amendments to CR agreements. CR are purposely difficult/almost impossible to amend. Any amendment to CR weakens entire agreement.

Bob moved to adjourn, seconded by Kathy. Meeting adjourned at 9pm.

Submitted: Meg Costello

Approved 11-21-22

Minutes Open Space Meeting November 21, 2022

Present: Kathy Sferra, Laurie Burnett, Bill Maxfield, Meg Costello

Absent: Bob Wilber, Vin Antil

Minutes of October 12: Kathy Sferra moved to approve minutes as amended. Laurie Burnett seconded. Minutes approved.

Letter of resignation from Liz Beck accepted. Committee looking for another member. Select board office will post opening on town website.

Update from Conservation Director on Pending Conservation/Development Projects:

- **Athens Lane:** pending development plans; open space has not changed much with revised plans. Next hearing for this development is December 13; waiting on Sue Carter to review plans
- **Stow Acres:** move to January closing for tax reasons; doing survey for buying by Stow; Stow probably divide purchased land in three parcels and divide between recreation and conservation; Memo of Understanding for management of property.
- Donation of land to conservation on **Kingland Road** by lake is around .25 acres. Abuts parcel owned by conservation/town already. Plans include possible canoe/kayak launch. Conservation will put up boundary markers and do survey to determine clear boundaries and connection with Wildlife Woods conservation land. Trails already established.
- **Small pieces of open space** being secured: deeds will be recorded this week for these properties:
 - Police station/minister pond piece (mitigation for Article 97 legislation at Heritage Lane)
 - Parcel on Hudson Road at Sandy Brook (mitigation for Article 97 legislation for Box Mill Bridge)
 - Transfer of Gleasondale school lot from conservation to recreation

Track Road: town received \$750,000 for design path. Current concept is 10 foot wide paved path with 4 foot stone dust on outer sides. MA DOT has raised concerns and discussions are currently underway. Committee members asked about other projects including Hallock Point, Bose Property, Pennie Lane Open Space and the Intel Warehouse.

In general: need **overall plan to connect conserved land**: Hale Corzine, Hemmingway, Athens Land, Pennie Lane, Arbor Glen. This is likely to be a recommendation in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Draft Protected/Developed Land Map: OS Committee **tracking land development and land protected** each year. Goal is 1:1. At present, Stow above that benchmark. 2015 Open space survey results: one third of land is undeveloped/unprotected. 36% wanted to maintain 1:1 ratio. 44% of respondents wanted to do better than 1:1 ratio, to protect as much open space land as possible. Town of Lincoln recognized early that it is cheaper to buy land and keep open rather than absorb resulting costs for schools and services that comes from development.

Review/Discuss Draft Resilience map: Need to articulate why chosen for resilience with many data layers: open space, water resources, flood plains/remediation, wildlife corridors, green corridors. Question of how to connect these data layers with conservation parcels and trails within Stow. Need to think about density as a town; how Stow can balance affordable housing with large new homes.

Discussion about possibility of accessory **apartments to provide affordable housing and** preserve rural character of Stow.

Review of OS committee charge: need to articulate reasoning for open space and recreation plan, to be used as advisory to Select Board, Chapter 61 considerations, 2050 METRO comprehensive plan, climate resilience. Value of OS Committee charge: “organizational conscience” use when making decisions. Need to establish evidence-based value drivers as potential tools to assess partners and priorities, equity stewardship, implement future creative decision making.

Possible presentation by **Sudbury Valley Trustees** in early 2023. Current projects, new land prioritization around four aspects of farming, community, biodiversity, natural services.

Next OS meeting is scheduled for January 18th. Change to third Wednesday of each month.

Motion to adjourn: Meg. Second: Bill Unanimous adjourn.

Approved as amended by unanimous vote 2-15-23