

Open Space Meeting August 16, 2023

Present: Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Laurie Burnett, Meg Costello, Dorothy Spaulding, Bill Byron, Bill Maxwell (remote meeting)

Meeting opened at 7:07pm.

Approval of minutes from June: Laurie moved to accept minutes, Bill seconded. Meg and Bob abstained since absent for June meeting.

Conservation Department update:

Stow Acres: Department staff began effort to layout foot trails on west side of north course; trail cams installed for observing wildlife; date for master plan public forum is October 18. Discussion of future use of both north and south courses. Plans to close entire north course for three days for public events associated with Master Plan. October 29 is the date for a community event on north course which will be tours of golf course, festival; development on north course is behind schedule; engineers finalizing plan; ready for ZBA hearing in September or October.

Hallock Point: Town owes Conservation Restriction to Stow Conservation Trust for CR state review of CR proposals; CR reviewer position at state level is vacant, thus backlog.

Cottages at Wandering Pond: review by Planning Board; ready to file with Conservation Department; raised concerns about open space; need plan for area to form trail network; should be need driven by conservation and open space; not let developer chose area with parking; hope for more acquisitions /easements for western edge.

Captain Sargent-Red Acre Woodlands connector-- upcoming joint opening ceremony with Town and Trust

Marble Hill: new entrance planned to reconfigure entrance and life course. Town ready to build COA van shelter/carport near new entrance to conservation area.

OSRP: public input closed; detailed comments from Planning Board; work to finish for final approval of OS plan working with provisional approval: fix maps, add info into tables for parcels, accessibility, appendices; revision embedded/re-paged/new maps/recent photos—all completed by end of September 2023.

Goals and priorities for 2024:

Upcoming meetings: September 20, October 23, November 20, December 21

Next year: work on open space connections with Wandering Pond; work with Stow Acres with 189 housing units integrating trail network; possibly Spring Hill and Hemingway Farm for trail network. Hemingway Farm has contamination on several lots; likely to rearrange housing layout

Bose still soliciting buyers

State Biomap report: will work on mapping for OS plan; take model of planning at Stow Acres and apply onto Butternut for future planning.

Perkins Land in Chapter 61A 90 acres along Assabet River up for sale; Vin will bring up this parcel up to attention of Trustees of Reservations

Comprehensive Plan: hired consultant to develop comprehensive plan; will want to encourage them to incorporate open space plan.

Need to send out message of open space and conservation: insecurity about cost to preserve open space; open space not raising taxes; enhances community resilience and partner with housing; indigenous voices being heard.

Broad work plan: Conservation working on town wide trail map. Planning Board work with Conservation Department to identify areas for MBTA planned development; find land that might benefit being multi-unit housing/affordable units.

Next meeting: September 20

Vin moved to adjourn at 8:45pm. Bill seconded. Approved.

Approved by vote of the Open Space Committee on 9-20-23