

MINUTES, STERLING OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Meeting, June 7, 2007

Initial attendance: Bob Protano, Brian Cline, Bill Ayadi, Peder C. Pedersen (secretary). From 7:16 PM onwards, Marion Larson and Mary Ann McLeod were in attendance, and a quorum established.

The secretary started to record minutes at 7:08 PM.

The question was raised by Peder as to the requirements to the state-mandated Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) update and what is needed to produce a plan that can be approved. Brian stated that Marion Larson has sent out a link to a site that describes the requirements (<http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/openspace/default.htm>)

The main task will be to update the OSRP, and maybe to reorganize it somewhat. The complete text for the 2002 Sterling OSRP can be found at: http://www.town.sterling.ma.us/doc_forms.php, and look for [Open Space Plan, Final Draft](#) .

ACTION ITEM; Brian will get the 2002 OSRP in MS Word from MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission)

At this point of the meeting, a quorum was established.

We have approximately \$129 in the OSIC budget left to spend before the end of June, and we wish to allocate all of the funds for mapping services from Al Futterman, from the Nashua River Watershed Association.

Update from Marion Larson: There will be a meeting between Marion, Bill, Brian and Jim French. The purpose of this meeting is to acquire information about the various DCR lands including location, activities allowed/prohibited and other information that will be useful for both the OSRP update and the Conservation and Recreation Guide.

In his role as chair of the Sterling Land Trust, Jim French had also delegated information about the SLT properties to be given to Marion, but she has not heard from anyone on the Land Trust.

Marion had requested and did receive maps and documentation from Mass. Division of Fish and Wildlife, regarding endangered species and important natural communities found within the town. This information will be appropriate to include in the updated Sterling OSRP.

Brian Cline received maps, recently made available, regarding watershed protection, produced by *Wachusett Working Landscape Partnership* (WWLP, pronounced wil-lup). Various layers of the map may be available from WWLP upon request.

Bob Protano will produce lists over Sterling sub-divisions, both (i) new, and (ii) approved, and (iii) potential.

A deadline of mid-July for providing updated information was suggested by Marion L as a way to give people a target to achieve.

For the Sterling open space plan, Peder will take responsibility for *Landscape Inventory – Scenic Vistas*. The commonwealth may have done an update since 2002. One can search under “landscape inventory” at www.mass.gov or alternatively at the DCR website. Here is the link to Scenic Landscapes -- <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/scen-inv.htm>
In terms of what is defined as “Scenic Vistas”, there may be a difference between the local perspective and the state perspective. We want to limit “Scenic Vistas” to space that is publicly accessible, i.e., open to the public.

Here is a link to Historic Landscapes --
<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/Inventoryprog.htm>

In terms of what is considered “Open Space,” we will include DCR land, cemeteries, town land, and land trust land.

Another topic was brought up: “Scenic Roadway.” Here, according to Melanie Clark, Town Clerk, Sterling has initiated a process, involving town boards, whereby town roads can be designated *scenic roads*. Quite a number of town roads in Sterling have now been designated *Scenic roads*. Note that the *scenic road* designation cannot be applied to State Roads and to numbered roads. The Sterling Open Space Plan should include the *scenic bylaw*, which can be obtained from Melanie, the Town clerk. Brian and at least one other member noted their recollection of a Town meeting where all Town roads were identified as “scenic” but the details were not available at the meeting.

We need to solicit public input for the revised open space plan. Marion will pursue government committee for Sterling for input. She will ask the committee members what challenges they face, *i.e.*, what is working and what is not working, and take notes.

In addition, we need to do some amount of survey. In 2002, the survey was put in the *Meetinghouse News*. We can consider this again, perhaps post the survey on line, and perhaps have it available to pick up at public places such as the library. We may also wish to find good surveys from other towns.

Bob Protano brought up a broader philosophical question: At what point do you stop acquiring open space? There is a finite amount of land and water. Right now, DCR owns between 29% and 33% of Sterling, while 7-10% is under ConCom (Town of Sterling) ownership. Additional open space lands are also owned by the Town (under control of DPW or other Town entity), and the non-profit Sterling Land Trust. With respect to DCR, they used to buy the land outright and then transfer the deed. Now, if they can, they avoid buying the land and instead place a conservation restriction on the deed.

Next meeting will be joint with West Boylston, on 6/21. There may be an opportunity at that time to brainstorm re survey technique.

The discussion turned to the question of our participation in the Sterling Fair 2007. What are the objectives of participation? Can we spend our limited amount of volunteer time better on other activities? A Town Picnic, organized by the Sterling OSIC, may be a better activity.

In that same context, Sterling OSIC needs a mission statement. Our goals need to be clearly defined in an effort to operate as effectively as possible and clearly communicate OSIC's role to others.

Meeting adjourned 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peder C. Pedersen, Secretary, with input from Brian Cline, Chairman