

Sterling Open Space Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2015
Butterick Building, Park Street, Sterling

Present: Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson, Marion Larson, Bob Protano, Erin Rehrig, invited guest John Scannell, DCR Division of Water Supply Protection

Meeting began at 7:20PM

Review of Wachusett Watershed Public Access Plan

Chairman Pedersen took the group through relevant, highlighted sections of the DCR's 2011 Update to the Public Access Plan for Wachusett Watershed in preparation for planned discussion of Sterling Trails designation with John Scannell at 7:45. Briefly reviewed mock up trail pamphlet as an example of what Sterling Trails information could include.

Meeting with John Scannell, DCR 7:45PM

John Scannell, Regional Director DCR Division of Water Supply Protection, attended the meeting at the invitation of OSIC to discuss the potential of designating 2 trails on DCR Watershed land as *Sterling Trails*, i.e. Stillwater Basin Trail and Pine Hill Esker Trail. After introducing the group, Chairman Pedersen explained the purpose of the Sterling Trails designation and pointed out the trails on DCR land that OSIC would like to designate. He expressed a desire to find a way that both DCR and OSIC goals are met. Scannell thanked the group for the opportunity to meet and gave a brief description of DCR Watershed protection goals and how water quality is the priority, while recreation is not promoted like DCR state parks and forest. Scannell had walked the Stillwater Basin area, was concerned about parking until he was apprised of the information that parking would be encouraged at the parking lot across from the Sterling athletic fields and snack shack, with the trailhead on town conservation land. Scannell expressed his opinion that there was a good chance the Stillwater Basin trail would be reviewed favorably by staff as it is mostly a forest road. He reported that staff walked the Pine Hill Esker trail which is more like a foot path, not 8-10 foot wide mowed forest roads. DCR less inclined to promote footpaths due to decreasing stability and concerns for erosion in to the reservoir and tributary streams.

Director Scannell spoke about other groups which have made requests on trail or other recreation activities from DCR. In some cases there are problems when groups have gone beyond agreed upon activities. Discussion about educational mission of the committee and a sample brochure of potential trail was also provided to Scannell. Brochure (and OSIC website) for DCR trails would include information on allowed activities to further DCR's educational mission. Scannell noted that the educational approach by OSIC is unique and positive.

M. Larson brought up the Sterling Farmer's Market where OSIC can have a table and is looking for different groups to staff the table on a rotating basis. Given the educational side of its mission, DCR Division of Water Supply Protection was identified as a potential participant; related to that, Marion had spoken to DCR Ranger Keith Vicari in December. She inquired of Scannell if this was something that would have DCR approval? Scannell was very positive, providing names of potential staff for which this activity would be relevant. After further discussion, he encouraged OSIC to pick one DCR trail, that he would be reporting back to his staff as part of the decision making process. OSIC members thanked Scannell for his time and expressed optimism for working with DCR.

Final Tee Shirt Decision -- Given the late hour, OSIC members agreed to make final decision on T-Shirt color as Bob Protano announced the agreed-upon color was no longer available. He provided samples, color was chosen to make the shirts. Cost will be \$650.

Winter Farmers Market -- Bob Protano will be visiting the Winter Farmer's Market to get a sense of the space and activity. M. Larson reported that she had heard it was very slow. Other OSIC members noted they had not seen any publicity--one brief mention in the Clinton Item.

FY 2015 Budget Request -- OSIC members discussed potential financial needs for submitting budget. Folding tables, chairs, printing of Sterling Trail brochures were among the items for funding. Marion Larson made a motion that OSIC request \$1250, same amount as last fiscal year. Motion seconded by Erin Rehrig, unanimously passed.

Next Meeting Date set for Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7 PM at the Butterick Building.

Meeting Adjourned 8:55 PM.

Submitted by Marion Larson, OSIC member.