

Butterick Municipal Building -- Room 201

In attendance: Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson, Jeff Keay, Chuck Plaisted, Marion Larson, Geoff Caldwell Guest: Sue Aldrich

Meeting called to order: 7:07pm.

1. M. Larson moved to accept the agenda for February 19. Motion 2nd by J. Wilkinson and carried unanimously.
2. Note taker: J. Keay volunteered.
3. M. Larson moved to accept the minutes of the January 15, 2020 meeting as written. Motion 2nd by P. Pedersen and carried unanimously.
4. 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) – Conditional Approval
 - “Conditional Approval” granted by M. Cryan of the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services.
 - Indicates that we can apply for grants requiring a completed OSRP, but we cannot receive monies until final approval is granted.
 - M. Larson went over the letter received from M. Cryan listing the additions and edits to the plan that we need to take to achieve final approval.
 - Discussed best ways to find the information needed for these additions and edits.
 - M. Larson will be working on this with help as needed from the committee members.
5. Scope of Work Outline for Trail Maintenance
 - G. Caldwell noted that he had just emailed the work outline.
 - Explained that the outline categories included ways of assessing a trail, listing any maintenance needed, describing unique features on or near the trail, the parking available, bridges on the trail, and bridges needed on the trail. He will work on additional categories to the outline.
6. Peg’s Pond Trail Update
 - C. Plaisted reported that the Sterling DPW has agreed to do the foundational work for the trail (i.e. cutting trees, installing a culvert, rough work on the trail}. This will significantly reduce the overall cost of constructing the trail. C. Plaisted also reported that we have a written commitment from P. Lyons.
 - C. Plaisted, J. Keay, P. Spaulding, and V. Buckley attended the meeting of the Conservation Commission to explain the trail route, the purpose of the trail, a description of the trail, the grants we are pursuing, and other steps we are taking to make the trail a reality. We also asked for support of the project from the Conservation Commission. They voted unanimously to support the Peg’s Pond Trail initiative. We asked them to compose a letter of support.
 - Noted that we are looking at various grant opportunities, with the goal of having three viable possibilities. J. Keay will be working on this.
 - Discussed the “focus area” of the grant applications such as multiple recreational

opportunities, ADA compliant, et al.

- Future plans include:

 - Bringing the proposal before the Board of Selectmen.

 - Discussing the proposal with Ross Perry, with the goal of getting cost estimates for the project.

- Support also from the Houghton School PTO and administration, and the Senior Center.

- Support from Friends of the Sterling Senior for park improvement using their memorial funds.

- M. Larson noted that she will be leading a nature hike from the Senior Center this summer.

7. Hardscrabble Road update

- P. Pedersen told the committee that no progress on the kiosk and expanded parking can take place until warmer weather.

8. Expenditures for trail clearing

- Determined that no monies have been spent on trail clearing this month,

9. Picnic Tables for Sholan Park

- Discussion of materials to use for construction of tables.

- J. Wilkinson will check this year's budget to see if there is enough money to buy the materials needed.

10. New Business

- S. Aldrich asked the committee to support placing a warrant on the Annual Town Meeting agenda, for the town to fund, through the addition of a 3% surcharge on residents' real estate taxes, implementation of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

 - Explained that the monies raised are used to help communities preserve open space and historical sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. The money raised is matched by the state.

 - M. Larson moved that the committee send a "letter of support" for the CPA initiative to the Board of Selectman. G. Caldwell seconded and it was approved unanimously. C. Plaisted will write the letter.

- Discussed trail blazing including best practices. Next trail for blazing will be the Allenwood Trail, followed by the Waushacum Trail. Will also begin work to map the Waushacum Trail.

- Checked out map supplied by the North Quabbin Trail Association. Pointed out that graphics were large, and the map was easy to read.

- Noted that the North County Land Trust (NCLT) is meeting March 3rd.

 - Looked at a "weighted parcel map" of Sterling provided by NCLT. Discussed looking into their methodology and whether we should adopt the same methodology for our mapping.

- Announced that Geoff Caldwell has officially been sworn in as a member of OSIC.

- Noted that Clinton Water Works is doing forestry work in the Wekepeke, and has plans to remove two dams and a spillway that are part of the Lynde Basin reservoirs. P. Pedersen has contacted Clinton asking that they leave the spillway for historical and aesthetic reasons.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 18

Meeting Adjourned: 8:50pm

Respectfully Submitted: Jeff Keay