

## OSIC Meeting Notes – December 13, 2023 7:00 PM

In attendance: Chuck Plaisted, Jeff Keay, Paul Lekberg, Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson

Guest: Patrick Fox

Meeting called to order: 7:08pm.

1. C. Plaisted asked if the meeting was being recorded by anyone. All replied in the negative.
2. J. Wilkinson moved to accept the agenda for December 13, 2023. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Lekberg and carried unanimously.
3. Note taker: J. Keay volunteered.
4. J. Wilkinson moved to accept the minutes of the October 11, 2023 meeting as written. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Pedersen and carried unanimously.
5. Rename Butterick Nature Trail
  - P. Fox asked OSIC to look into the possibility of renaming the Butterick Trail in honor of Jeffrey E. Cranson. Discussed needed improvements to the trail, such as minor repairs to the concrete steps, addition of a hand rail, and upgrades to the trailhead kiosk. Steps to take will include:
    - determining the scope of the project.
    - writing a proposal for implementing changes to, and improving the trail.
    - checking with interested parties (i.e. Conservation Committee, town offices and officers).
  - J. Wilkinson moved that "OSIC investigate the development of, and improvements to the Butterick Nature Trail, and to consider changing the name of the trail to honor Jeffrey E. Cranson". The motion was seconded by P. Lekberg and carried unanimously.
6. The Future of OSIC's Guided-Hiking Program
  - Discussed the possibility of a guided hike program through the Sterling Senior Center. C. Plaisted will contact Sheila Beane, the senior center director, about the idea and arrange a meeting. C. Plaisted, P. Pedersen, and J. Keay will plan on attending.
7. Progress on the Lynde Basins Trail Beaver Pond bypass
  - C. Plaisted checked out the flooding on the trail with B. Bershad. B. Bershad felt that installing and filling in over and around a culvert should work as a way to keep the trail open.
  - P. Pedersen contacted M. Ward, the Clinton Town manager, about arranging for a joint meeting to discuss cleanup from the lumbering done in the Lynde Basin area. He reported that M. Ward is open to the idea.
8. Assessing properties coming off the Chapter 61 Tax Abatement.
  - C. Plaisted provided members with a spreadsheet listing Chapter 61 properties in Sterling that are 25 acres or more. He will also send the spreadsheet to the Sterling Land Trust, and the North County Land Trust.

- Discussed the need to establish priorities: focus on the properties that are most vulnerable for development. We will look into having OSIC be on the list of stakeholders that should be notified when a property opts out of its Chapter 61 designation.
- We will research the best content for letters to be sent out to Chapter 61 property owners letting them know the various options they have for their properties. Will also work to keep the North County Land Trust involved in this process. We will work towards arranging a meeting with Chapter 61 landowners in March.

#### 9. Budget Needs and Priorities for FY2025

- C. Plaisted noted that our annual appropriation depends on using the funds we are given. Also, that our specific needs have to be documented.
- The committee agreed on the following items and amounts:
  - o Hand rails for the beginning of the Butterick Trail - \$750
  - o Replacement of faded maps at trail kiosks - \$1,000
  - o Booth at the Sterling Fair - \$150 (will share cost of \$300 with Sterling Land Trust)
  - o QR Code Trail Signs - \$300
  - o Battery powered week whacker - \$300
  - o Total Budget - \$2,500

#### 10. Year-end review of OSIC accomplishments and goals for the coming year

- The following goals were discussed:
  - o Recruiting new members to OSIC
  - o Organizing a Chapter 61 owner's meeting for March
  - o Extension of the Mass Central Rail Trail
  - o Trail maintenance
    - upgrading information at the kiosks
    - upgrading the trail on the Hall Parcel

#### 11. New Business

- There was no new business to discuss.

#### 12. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:00pm.

#### 13. Adjournment: J. Wilkinson moved to adjourn. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Lekberg and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted: Jeff Keay