

Sterling Open Space Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2016
Butterick Building, Park Street, Sterling

Members Present: Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson, Bob Protano, Marion Larson, Erin Rehrig

Other attendees: (8:00) Marie and Scott Pendleton: MaryAnne MacLeod; Susan Valentine, Barbara Roberti --Conservation Commission

Meeting Began at 7:09PM

Acceptance of Minutes: Jim Wilkinson made a motion to accept December minutes, Peder Pedersen seconded. Unanimous vote to approve minutes.
M. Larson will take minutes for this meeting.

MOA with DCR Update: P. Pedersen reports that the MOA is still being reviewed by DCR legal.

Kiosk Construction -- Some members (Protano and Wilkinson) gathered earlier in the month at Bob Protano's home to construct and information kiosk. Expertise in carpentry was provided by a neighbor, Chris Tetrault. It is heavy, roof is done but not placed on due to weight and maneuverability. Another construction date for another kiosk was set for Feb 13 9-1 at Protano's home. Committee will need to decide where the kiosks will be placed.

Budget -- 2016 Budget Balance--There is \$539.48 left in the account which will be spent for kiosk wood. J. Wilkinson reports that the accountant could not find the figure for the funds which had been voted on at Town Meeting. M Larson said the Town Meeting Warrant should have a figure; Jim Wilkinson will look into this further.

2017 -- Ideas for budget items for next fiscal year included material for kiosks, printing large maps to go in kiosks, sign for Farmers Market tent and trail brochures. Jim W will put together a budget based on those ideas and provide for the next meeting.

Open Space Plan Update -- The plan needs to be approved in 2017. M. Larson went online and also contacted Melissa Cryan to find out if there were any changes in the plan elements--there are not and we can still go for a 7 year interval. M. Larson briefly went over the sections that will need updating and explained the process and requirements for the benefit of the newer members who had not been through this in the past. She will send an outline to members that will indicate what sections need new/updated information; members can then choose what portions they will work on.

Info on Town Pound and Butterick Trail -- Erin Rehrig visited the Historical Society building and gleaned information about the Town Pound that can be used in a trail brochure for the Butterick Nature Trail. P Pedersen reported that after speaking to Bill Tuttle about the need to re-install the Butterick Nature Trail sign, it was done. Barbara Roberti and Sue Valentine of Con Comm had come in the room and when asked about property boundaries for that parcel, said they would arrange for the committee to get the information as the committee was talking about making a loop trail. Roberti said the trail had been an "out and back" trail in the past.

Trail Brochures -- P. Pedersen provided draft of Central Mass Rail Trail brochure to the committee. It is being reviewed by Wachusett Greenways. Pedersen noted the flora and fauna section needs text-- Marion will provide info.

8:00 PM -- Scheduled meeting with Pendletons and MaryAnne MacLeod. Conservation Commission Chair Barbara Roberti and member Susan Valentine were also present.

Chairman Pedersen reminded parties that only new information about Mudgett Orchard should be covered at this meeting and that there was also going to be discussion about a trail proposal on nearby Conservation land known as the Hall Avenue parcel. The access road has been mowed and mowing in the orchard along with some poison ivy treatment has taken place. MacLeod expressed concern that parking area would infringe on a red maple swamp and vernal pool location.

The Conservation Commission is currently seeking support from various town entities to apply for a trails grant from DCR that would involve trail connections from Mudgett Orchard and eventually connect to the Town Beach area on East Lake Waushacum. P. Pedersen received an email from Conservation Agent Matt Morro regarding the proposal and Roberti and Valentine provided some other information at this time. Part of the project would also involve placement of interpretive signs and benches. The trail and property could be utilized by the Recreation Department with the children's programs that occur at the beach in the summer. Currently the Recreation Department, 2 of 3 Selectmen, the DPW and the Historical Society have expressed support for this project. Con Comm is seeking a support letter from OSIC as well. They have a tight deadline--end of this month. When asked if there was something in writing for OSIC, they did not have anything to offer, but would tell the Committee what is planned.

Scott and Marie Pendleton as well as Maryanne MacLeod (both of Swett Hill Road) aired concerns about a recent trail grant proposal that is being initiated by the Conservation Commission for the Hall Avenue parcel (Con Comm property) located across the street from Mudgett Orchard parcel. Concerns about increased erosion and poison ivy treatments could affect the lake were raised by MacLeod. MacLeod pointed out that the document that showed a concept of the trail was in wetlands. Con Comm members pointed out it was a concept document and the trail lines were drawn before the property was walked. She also said that trails have been created in the past on the Hall Ave. property have fallen into disuse. Pendletons expressed concerns about parking and privacy. Very concerned that abutters had not been contacted about the proposal. Valentine and Roberti pointed out that 2 abutters have been supportive and that there is no requirement to notify abutters at this stage. B Protano questioned that as there are some notification requirements by Planning Board, though that usually involves a hearing. Rehrig suggested that even if not required, it would be a courtesy to do so -- she has had experience with this kind of situation in other places she has lived and there have been positive outcomes as a result. M. Larson reminded guests that OSIC has no jurisdiction on what occurs on Con Comm lands. She pointed out that wetlands protection is the Commission's legal responsibility and that she had no doubt Con Comm would be keeping this in mind if the project went forward. Larson asked Pendletons and MacLeod what they hoped to accomplish in this meeting. MacLeod asked that OSIC not support the Con Comm proposal. Pedersen brought the lively discussion to a close and guests left.

After some discussion, a motion was made by M. Larson that OSIC provide a letter of support to the Conservation Commission for the Hall Ave Grant proposal after receiving a formal written request for a support letter with project description from ConComm . Motion seconded by Jim Wilkinson. More discussion ensued, then a vote to pass motion was unanimous.

Next Meeting Date: February 17, 2015 at 7 PM at the Butterick Building.

Meeting Adjourned 9:30PM. Submitted by Marion Larson, OSIC member.