

Sterling Open Space Implementation Committee Meeting

April 17, 2014

Butterick Building, Park Street, Sterling

Present: Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson, Marion Larson, Brian Cline. Robert Protano arrived at 7:30

Meeting began at 7:10 PM

Agenda for tonight's meeting was agreed upon. M. Larson agreed to take minutes.

Acceptance of February Meeting Minutes--Motion made by J Wilkinson and 2nd by M. Larson to accept the February 27, 2014 meeting minutes. A couple of minor amendments made and minutes as amended were unanimously accepted.

Budget Expenditures--For FY 2014 there was discussion on purchasing boundary signs for conservation land and also to support the cost of herbicide spraying on the Mudgett orchard parcel on Swett Hill Rd. Brian Cline will determine whether this is an allowable expenditure, evaluate what the cost will be and ascertain whether DWP will be willing to do this. A clean up event was also proposed at the Hardscrabble Road property. Money could be used for refreshments and possible garbage disposal. This last suggestion was deemed most practical in the time remaining in the fiscal year. P. Pedersen will contact Department of Public Works Superintendent Bill Tuttle about logistics to accomplish this.

Hardscrabble Road -- Questions were asked about public access rights on the road from either end, property boundary of town land recently acquired. It would be useful to know the legal status of the road that is currently unimproved. This is an area that is ripe for promoting for recreation if we know the status of the road. Clean up event details to be planned, perhaps as a joint event with Sterling Land Trust since there is SLT land there as well. P Pedersen will broach subject with Jim French of the SLT.

Sterling Trail Properties -- P Pedersen presented an initial list of Sterling Trails on which to concentrate mapping and promotion efforts. Waushacum Overlook off Tara Lane, Hardscrabble Road property, (Town of Sterling), Wekepeke Watershed Lands, Heywood Reservoir area (Town of Clinton), Drenova property off North Row Rd and Allenwood off Heywood Rd (Sterling Land Trust), Sterling Spur of the MA Central Rail Trail (Wachusett Greenways), Stillwater Farm Interpretive Trail (DCR).

Trail Mapping -- P. Pedersen showed the group some of the trails he is mapping with his GPS device.

Trail Maintenance Plan for Waushacum Overlook-- B. Cline said Conservation Commission has granted permission for OSIC to work on the property. He does not see the ad hoc committee that currently exists will be interested in maintenance issues. He would like OSIC to look at regional aspect of the property with connections to the Town Beach and the Mudgett Orchard parcel. Major trails are in good shape at this time. B Cline would like to see some more developed along property line to deal with encroachment issues. M. Larson expressed concern about how many trails are "needed" and if there are other ways of dealing with encroachments. Still waiting on developments with the deeded trailhead access from Tara Lane property. Trailhead and sign cannot be permanently established until landowner

accomplishes certain tasks. Regarding spraying, Con Comm did learn license was required--DPW has a licensed applicator and training will also be available for at least one or 2 more people. M Larson reiterated that for the poison ivy, spraying along the trails would be best, but leave the rest as it is an important wildlife food. Perhaps OSIC could use some of the FY 14 budget to pay for spraying. Regarding Mudgett Orchard, B. Cline inquired about the possibility of assessment of property and management options. M. Larson said she would see if there is someone from DFW who might have suggestions. Also want to develop a trail around the property. There is a scheduled hike for December 7, 2014 that will include coverage of the APR area and connecting with the Music School at the Rittenhouse facility on Kendall Hill Rd.

Formulation of Trail Maintenance Plan -- J Wilkinson talked about the need to inventory and prioritize what trails to feature. The list mentioned earlier would be the start. Need to identify allies/partners in this endeavor, perhaps encourage an "adopt" a trail or section of trail in areas where needed.

Grant Proposal Status -- The DCR grant proposal went in for the February deadline, B. Cline says grant announcement will be made in early October.

Update on OSIC Tasks -- New file cabinet for OSIC, M Larson obtained keys and will move contents of file cabinet in Selectmen's office to the cabinet in Rm 201 with computer and projector already stored. Other members reported earlier in meeting.

New Business -- B. Cline reports Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition is pulling together new map of trails in the region (15 towns). OSIC walk to be held in May. Questions were raised regarding the status of the Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) and the Trout Unlimited project in the Wekepeke area. B. Cline and P. Pedersen presented the following information, with a follow-up planned for next meeting: Funding of Rushing River Institute staff person appears to have been eliminated, due to funding cut by Nestle. WWRI has not met since September possibly due to fund cuts.

Next Meeting Date: May 14, 7PM

Meeting Adjourned 8:45 PM