

Sterling Open Space Implementation Committee Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2014
Butterick Building, Park Street, Sterling

Present: Peder Pedersen, Jim Wilkinson, Marion Larson, Brian Cline-Guest, Erin Rehrig, Interested citizen

Meeting began at 7:05 PM

Agenda for tonight's meeting was agreed upon. M. Larson agreed to take minutes. Erin Rehrig introduced herself as an interested citizen--had been on the Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative with Rushing River Institute--is a runner and interested in learning more about trails in town. P. Pedersen asked for Erin's contact information to be sent meeting minutes etc.

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

Budget Expenditures--Brian Cline recommended against purchasing herbicide for poison ivy on Waushacum Overlook--he spoke to DPW Supervisor Tuttle who said their licensed staff could do spot spraying. Mudgett property needs would be much more than our budget. P. Pedersen brought forward information on directional signs from several companies. Motion made Jim Wilkinson and seconded by Peder Pedersen to spend remaining budget on arrow directional markers with varied colors, nails and nail gun. M. Larson suggested to P. Pedersen that he get the tax exempt number and documentation for this purchase. Further suggestion by B. Cline to (in the next fiscal year) look into markers suitable for trail marking in meadows which include a tool to be used to drive marker into ground.

Strategy for Declaring a trail a "Sterling Trail" -- Discussion led by P. Pedersen. P. Pedersen suggested that trails be geographically scattered, with interesting cultural, historic, geologic and aesthetic characteristics. "Sterling Trail" can also be viewed as a play on words--would be good to have a unifying logo for this designation. B. Cline reminded committee about the MRPC trail mapping survey from several years back and that we should get the data layer. M. Larson pointed out the need to "ground truth" that information.

Inputs on any Forms, Regulations Relative to Trail Marking--P. Pedersen spoke with Ken Williams who had no information that there are any rules, but suggested Colleen Abrams of Wachusett Greenways. She provided suggestion and Pedersen also found a guidance document from the Hudson Valley (sent attachments to committee by email).

Review of Draft Letters -- P. Pedersen provided draft copy of letter to Selectmen and ConComm to declare our intent to map trails, and draft letter to landowners (public and private) where trails may be crossing. OSIC would ask permission to blaze (or reblaze) trails and maintain them. J. Wilkinson liked letters and their content. A few suggestions in content was offered by the group. M. Larson suggested that the initial letter to Selectmen and ConComm include an offer to be on the agenda for more details if

the Selectmen were so inclined. With new Selectman elected face-to-face time could be helpful and we have not been in front of Selectmen for at least 2 years.

Expanded list of proposed Sterling Trails -- P. Pedersen spoke with Jim French who suggested the first list be of 10 trails from the 8 mentioned at last meeting. Trails at the following properties suggested for the 10: Hardscrabble Road area, Lynde Basin Trail at Wekepeke, Heywood Reservoir from Heywood Rd, Stillwater Esker Trail (from Rte 62), Stillwater Intrepretive Trail (off Rte 140), Sterling Rail Trail (Gates Rd or Cider Mill area) Waushacum Overlook Trail (off Tara Lane), Stillwater River Trail (near Muddy Pond), Stuart Pond Trail (off Lucas Rd). Erin Rehrig inquired more into some details of some trail locations, is interested in the mapping aspects. B. Cline reminded group to be thinking about ways to connect trails throughout town as well. P. Pedersen emphasized this list is not a final, but for us to think about it and if any suggestions to provide them to him.

Hardscrabble Road Clean Up -- OSIC members were pleased with Tuttle's response to clean up in terms of taking trash materials. It was noted some property on Hardscrabble is privately owned -- Richard and Evelyn Maki -- has a lot of trash quite close to road. M. Larson agreed to find a way to contact owners to see if they would agree to allow for trash removal near road bed. Once this is secure, a date for clean up can be set and arrangements with DPW can be made.

Status of Wekepeke Watershed Restoration Initiative -- P Pedersen reports that there is no more funding from Nestle to Rushing River Institute which has apparently gone out of business. There is information and reports still on line by googling Wekepeke Watershed Initiative.

Update on Trout Unlimited Project on Wekepeke Brook -- Project is finalized, culvert replaced, report is available. M. Larson suggested that OSIC should get a copy and a copy should also be on file with ConComm and perhaps DFW since project was on Clinton Watershed land.

Update on OSIC Tasks -- Has moved contents of file cabinet in Selectmen's office to the cabinet in Rm 201 with computer and projector already stored. Other members inquired about the maps--at this time M. Larson has no idea where map box went, though it was clearly marked as Open Space Committee material. Will try to make inquiries.

New Business -- B Cline reports Montachusett Regional Trail Committee is pulling together new map of trails in the region (15 towns). OSIC walk to be held in May. Questions about Nestle and Wekepeke meeting. Cline and Pederson with the following information: Funding of Rushing River staff person has been cut by Nestle, it appears the company is abandoning interest in the property. Committee on this has not met since September due to fund cutting of staff person who was calling and coordinating the meetings.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2014, 7 PM at the Butterick Building. The meeting will be preceded by a 5:30 PM hike of the Stillwater River Basin near the mouth of the Wachusett Reservoir, to be led by Brian Cline. Due to the watershed-critical location, most of the hike will be on DCR-DWSP watershed lands, but we will also be on abutting Town of Sterling lands. Please plan to park & meet by 5:30PM in the "unimproved", gravel overflow parking lot directly across the street from the green-

painted “snack shack” on Griffin Road. The snack shack is adjacent to the track within about 30 feet of Griffin Rd.

Meeting Adjourned 9:05 PM.