

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
April 29, 2021 Final Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Committee Members: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Nicole Holmes, Lauren Webb, Kevin Mandeville

Absent: Maureen Minasian (in Florida)

Others: Michael Dutton, Town Manager, Harry Bailey, Conservation Commission, Pat Neary

1. The meeting, conducted on Zoom, began at 4:35 pm. A quorum was present.
2. Minutes of the March 25, 2021 meeting, as circulated prior to the meeting, were unanimously approved.
3. Town Manager, Michael Dutton, reported on the following issues:

Toole Property: The committee that has been looking for a location for a new fire station assessed 3 properties, including the 9-acre Toole Property on Pleasant Street, which was gifted to the town for a park years ago. Of the 3 properties considered, the Toole parcel has scored the highest. The town attorney is examining whether the conditions of the gift would allow use of the parcel for this purpose and discussing this with the Toole family. If it is selected as the site of the fire station, the potential for creating a playground on the site will be explored, as will the potential for creating a trail from this property to gain access to the Murray Needs Farm.

Community Preservation Committee Meeting/Hanson Farm: Hanson Farm was on the agenda at the April 28th Community Preservation Committee meeting, which Kevin and Eileen attended. Bob Hanson attended the meeting and said the family is interested in protecting the farm for use as agricultural land under a conservation restriction. The CPC said the Open Space Committee is the appropriate committee to take the lead on this. Michael met with members of the Hanson family over a year ago and agreed that this committee should reach out to the Hanson's. He suggested a working group might be formed to look at grant opportunities to acquire a conservation restriction on the farm land. As a first step, Eileen will contact Bob Hanson.

Wyman Meadow: Eileen asked Michael whether this property might be made more accessible to the public. This is one of the 6 town parklands, but probably the least known. It consists of 55 acres along the Taunton River, 35 acres of which are conservation land and 25 acres of wellhead protection land. The property directly abuts the Wildlands Trusts' 41-acre North Fork Preserve, which has no public access point. Wildlands Trust would like to work with Bridgewater to make both of these properties accessible to the public. Eileen asked if providing public access would be inconsistent with the need to protect the wellhead. Michael said the well head property must be protected but that would not necessarily preclude public use of this town conservation land.

4. New Business: Joint Meetings

- Eileen talked with Marilyn McDonald and Harry Bailey, Conservation Committee members, and Steve Solbo about a joint meeting with the Conservation Commission. They expressed interest and Steve suggested Thursday May 27th. Open Space Committee members agreed to this joint

meeting to be held Thursday May 27th at 6:30. (In light of this, the Open Space Committee regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, May 27th at 4:30 pm will be rescheduled for June 3 at 4:30 pm.)

- Eileen contacted Ray Ajemian, vice-chair of the Planning Board to ask if the board would be interested in a joint meeting. Ray contacted Pat Driscoll, Planning Board chair, who agreed a joint meeting is a good idea. The Planning Board meets on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays @6:30. Open Space Committee members are able to attend a joint meeting on Wednesday, May 19th at 6:30 pm. Eileen will confirm that this date is good for the Planning Board. [*This time was subsequently changed to 6:00 pm*].
- A joint meeting with Community Preservation Committee will be deferred.

5. Old Business

Tree ordinance/subdivision regulations. Nicole has continued to research limits on clear-cutting adopted by other municipalities. Michael suggested pursuing this issue through the “tree committee” that will be created to develop standards for shade tree management. The board/committee will be set up once the new DPW Director and Roadways Superintendent are appointed. Nicole will contact Jennifer Burke to discuss this.

Jennie Lenard Park. After the discussion at the last meeting, Eileen contacted Steve Solbo to find out if the Planning Board decision approving the adjacent subdivision contained conditions about the original developer’s commitment to upgrade the park. Planning Department staff did not find any such conditions.

Water quality at town lands. Eileen raised this issue with Harry Bailey and Steve Solbo who thought it was worth looking into. This could be brought up at a joint meeting between Open Space and the Conservation Commission.

Identification of Chapter 61 properties. Eileen contacted the Assessor’s office for a list of these properties, which she has received. Additional research is needed to determine the status of the properties and if they provide any potential for open space preservation.

6. Assignment of issues/projects

The following issues/projects were assigned to the members named:

- Tree preservation – Nicole
- Hanson Farm – Eileen and Kevin
- Chapter 61 properties – Lauren
- Wyman Meadow – Maureen, if she agrees
- Jennie Lenard - unassigned

7. Comments from public: Pat Neary asked whether the parking area at Carver Pond could be upgraded as it is badly rutted. It’s not clear what town department, if any, is responsible for parking at the parklands.

4. Next Meeting. Committee meetings are normally held on the 4th Thursday of each month. Because of the joint meeting with the Conservation Committee scheduled for May 27th at 6:30 pm, the next regular Open Space Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 3 at 4:30 pm, on Zoom.

5. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.