

Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee

June 3, 2021 at 4:30 pm

Attendance:

Committee Members: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Lauren Webb, Maureen Minasian, Nicole Holmes (joined at 5 pm) Kevin Mandeville (left at 5:15 pm)

Others: Pat Neary

1. The meeting, conducted on Zoom, began at 4:30 pm. A quorum was present. Eileen added the following item to the agenda under New Business: Comments on the Master Plan.
2. Minutes of the April 29, 2021 meeting, as circulated prior to the meeting, were unanimously approved.
3. No town staff attended the meeting.

4. **New Business:**

Lake Nippenicket project. Eileen discussed a letter dated May 17, 2021, that she received from Melissa Ramondetta, a citizen who is concerned about a project to construct a restaurant on the shore of Lake Nippenicket. The project was on the Planning Board agenda for the May 19th meeting but was withdrawn. A proposal for a restaurant on the Lake was met with strong citizen opposition at a Planning Board public hearing in February 2020. At this point, we have no information about the new proposal and whether it has changed from what was discussed at the February 2020 hearing. After discussion, committee members (5 present) voted unanimously in favor of keeping track of the project to consider impacts it might have on open space objectives.

Master Plan Comments: Pursuant to a June 1 email from Jennifer Burke, town committees have been asked to provide input on the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). The Barrett Planning Group (BPG) has worked with town staff to develop the CMP over the past 18 months and is now working on the implementation phase. It is hoping to learn from town committees about their ongoing work and future priorities. Each committee is asked to send one set of comments. If a committee is unable to complete this during the month of June, it should let the BPG know.

Eileen tried to review the information but the email did not contain the word document that was supposed to be attached. She also was unable to access the Dropbox to review the CMP sections. Other members of our committee received the email but had not yet tried to take a look. All committee members should review the sections applicable to Open Space. It may be necessary to convene a special meeting if we want to discuss our comments as a group prior to the end of June. Nicole and Eileen will share preliminary comments prior to deciding if a special meeting of the committee will be needed.

5, **Old Business:**

Joint Meetings with other town committees:

- Committee members felt that the May 19th joint meeting with the Planning Board was worthwhile. We should become knowledgeable about ways that Planning Board actions related to projects might advance or impede open space objectives.

- The joint meeting scheduled with the Conservation Commission for May 27th was canceled by this committee. We would like to reschedule a joint meeting but will wait until we have specific issues or projects we need ConCom input on before doing so.
- A joint meeting with the Community Preservation Committee will be held at a future date.

Tree Committee. Nicole reported that the first meeting of the Tree Committee was held on June 1, 2021. The committee members are Nicole, Shirley Krasinski, and Bill Maltby, the town tree warden. Other town staff at the meeting were: Michael Dutton, Jennifer Burke, Azu Etoniru and Paul Decosta.

Hanson Farm. Eileen met with members of the Hanson family on May 1st. Their intentions are for the farm to be transferred to a family member who will continue to operate the farm. The transfer will be subject to a restriction that the land will continue to be used for farming purposes, which will require that the development rights to the property be purchased and held by a third party. The family met with town staff pre-Covid and would like to get the discussion moving now. Eileen mentioned to them that the Wildlands Trust is experienced in structuring these types of transactions. She subsequently contacted Scott MacFaden, Director of Land Protection at Wildlands who is interested in assisting with this project.

Bob Hanson is concerned that the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan does not list all of the Hanson farm parcels that are in Chapter 61. He previously requested that this be corrected by the town and asked Eileen to look into this with town staff. Eileen has spoken with Michael Dutton, Jennifer Burke and the Assessor's Office and is continuing to pursue this. She talked with David Hanson again in mid-May and reported on the status of her discussion with town staff about the Chapter 61 parcels and her conversation with Wildlands Trust.

Chapter 61 properties. Lauren is reviewing the list of Chapter 61 properties in the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan and will try and update the information to assess current ownership and land use status of those properties.

High Street Dam and Bridge. Eileen reported that Town Manager Michael Dutton, recently submitted a comment letter to NOAA, the lead agency on the project to remove the High Street Dam and replace the High Street Bridge. The letter is in response to a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) related to mitigation for the loss of the two historic structures discussed during the "Section 106 Consultation Process" the town has been party to. The mitigation would include interpretive signs to be placed in Stanley Iron Works Park documenting the historic attributes of the bridge and dam. The town comment letter addressed concerns about provisions in the MOU that would make the town responsible for the cost of the mitigation measures.

6. The next OSC meeting will be July 22, 2021 @4:30 pm.

7. The meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.