

Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
September 8, 2021 at 4:30 pm
Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Committee Members present: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Lauren Webb (present until 5:35 pm), Maureen Minasian, Nicole Holmes (joined at 4:45 pm); absent: Kevin Mandeville

Others: Pat Neary

1. The meeting, conducted on Zoom, began at 4:40 pm. A quorum was present. Eileen added the following item to the agenda under New Business: town website information about parks
2. Minutes of the June 3, 2021 meeting, as circulated prior to the July 22 meeting (which was not held due to unavailability of a town Zoom connection), were unanimously approved.
3. No town staff attended the meeting.

4. **New Business:**

Organization of OSC. Eileen said that town boards/committees reorganize after July 1, including rotating chairs if possible. She asked if anyone is willing to take over as chair for the next year. As no one volunteered, Maureen nominated Eileen to serve as chair again. The nomination was seconded by Lauren and unanimously approved. Eileen agreed to serve as chair until July 2022. Nicole's term of the committee expired at the end of June 2021. She is willing to continue to serve on the committee and will contact Michael Dutton and ask to be reappointed. Eileen noted that she learned from the town clerk that members whose terms expire may continue to serve as members in full stead until someone is appointed to take their place.

Agricultural Commission. As part of the OSC's outreach to other town commissions and committees, on July 9, 2021, Eileen met with Lori Tunewicz-Gavin, a member of the Agricultural Commission (AC) that Eileen is personally acquainted with. Lori's term has expired and she said the AC has not been active for some time. The AC generally focused on fielding complaints about agricultural activities and tried to promote and support agriculture. It did not consider issues related to preservation of farmland believing that there was no funding available for such efforts. She suggested that for additional information Eileen contact Dave Anderson, who is still on the AC.

Eileen received a notice of the issuance of the **Massachusetts Conversation Handbook** and forward the link to OSC members for review. [Open Space Handbook: A Guide to Community Conservation in Massachusetts!](#) Lauren suggested that everyone review the Handbook and report back at the next meeting on something that they learned that can help inform our activities over the next year. All agreed to do so.

New item: Developing Town website information. Eileen added to the agenda a discussion about the OSC developing information for the town website related to open space, starting with the town parklands. Currently there is no easily-accessible information for town residents

about the parklands, such as the amenities and activities available, directions, and parking. Lauren agreed to work on this project. As a first step, the plans that were developed by the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater (NRTB) and given to the town a decade or so ago related to each of the parklands should be reviewed. Hard copies of these should be available at the Public Library and in the town archives. On-line links are on the town Conservation Commission web site. <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/320/Conservation>

5. **Old Business:**

Revised OSC Description. At our February 25, 2021 meeting, we approved revisions to the OSC description as it appeared on the Town website. Eileen had not followed up on finalizing the revisions. In late June, she sent the proposed revisions to Michael Dutton for his comments on the substance, and to find out about having the revisions formally approved. He responded that the changes did a good job refining the committee's responsibilities. He suggested that, since the revisions do not significantly alter the committee's charge, the committee could operate in accordance with them until the changes can be formally approved into the town code (along with revisions to several other areas of the code). Eileen asked the committee if this was an acceptable approach. Maureen made a motion to approve operating in accordance with the revisions adopted in February, pending formal adoption of those revisions at part of the town code. Lauren seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Tree Committee. Nicole provided an update stating that this group is reviewing a draft ordinance that would add some protection for large canopy trees and limit clear-cutting. Pat Neary asked if these provisions would be adopted as part of the zoning recodification currently under consideration. Nicole was not aware of the timeframe for the zoning changes or could not say whether the tree ordinance would be ready in time for inclusion in the zoning changes. Once the Tree Committee has drafted the ordinance language, Nicole will see if it can be made available for the OSC to review.

Hanson Farm. Eileen met with Michael Dutton and Jennifer Burke to discuss this on August 4. It was agreed that Eileen would set up a meeting at Hanson Farms with town staff, the Hansons, Scott McFaden, of Wildlands Trust, interested members of the Community Preservation Committee, with Eileen and Kevin Mandeville representing Open Space. The meeting is scheduled for 9/22 at noon at Hanson Farms. Eileen attended the August 23rd Community Preservation Committee meeting and discussed the 9/22 meeting Hanson Farms. The CPC has a new Eligibility Form for all projects and has requested that this form relating to Hanson Farms be submitted a week prior to the next CPC meeting (also on 9/22, at 6:30 pm). Eileen asked the OSC committee to approve submission of the Eligibility Form to the CPC, on behalf of the OSC as project sponsor. The completed form was emailed to members shortly before the meeting.

Chapter 61 properties. Lauren has reviewed the list of Chapter 61 properties in the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan and updated the information to show current ownership and land use status of

those properties. There are about 6-7 owners holding most of these properties. The next step is to map the properties to see if any of them might have potential value as open space based on their location, for example, being adjacent to existing open space or agricultural lands.

Wyman Meadows. Eileen has talked with Eric Boyer at Wildlands Trust (WT) about the potential for use of this town-owned open space to provide access to the adjacent 41-acres owned by WT. The WT property does not have access to any public roadway. Eileen mentioned this when she talked with Michael Dutton and Jennifer Burke on 8/4. Michael suggested that Kitty Doherty would have information about the history of this open space acquisition. Eileen is in contact with Kitty about this.

6. The next OSC meeting will be Wednesday October 13, 2021 @7:00 pm.

7. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Submitted by Eileen Hiney.