

TOWN OF ACTON
Open Space Committee
Friday, September 7, 2018
7:30 AM
Acton Town Hall - Room 9
Minutes

COMMITTEE MEMBERS : *Andy Magee, Terry Maitland, Emilie Ying, Matt Mostoller, Dick Hatfield, Will Hill, Tom Tidman (NR liaison), Katie Green (BoS liaison)*

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: *David Marshall*

RECORDING SECRETARY: *Fran Portante*

VISITORS: *Peggy Hebert, Joe Hebert, Christa Collins (SVT), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (ACT), Dave Honn, Sandra Mika*

Meeting opened at 7:30 AM.

Item #1: Minutes

Minutes of May 4, 2018: Terry moved to accept the Minutes, Dick seconded and the roll count was unanimous.

Minutes of July 13, 2018: Terry moved to accept the Minutes, Dick seconded and the roll count was unanimous.

Minutes of August 10, 2018: Terry moved to accept the Minutes, Dick seconded and the roll count was unanimous.

Issue #2: Wetherbee Street: Susan reported she had no response from a phone message she had left. No additional information.

Issue #3: Hebert Farm review: Peggy and Joe Hebert were in attendance. Tom Tidman, Bettina Abe and Fran Portante from the Natural Resources Dept. and Susan Mitchell-Hardt, from Acton Conservation Trust, met with Concord's Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye. She shared the experience of the town with the purchase of Barret's Mill farm. The town purchased the farm and now rents it to an active farmer. Concord had put out an RFP to solicit interested parties and they got 9 responses. Two families were approved to farm the property and they moved into the existing house. To promote the success of the project, the rental was priced at an affordable rate. The Affordable Housing Foundation helped fund the restoration of the house.

In contrast, the Hebert property doesn't have a house associated with it. Possibly including the Morrison Farm house could be part of a package for Acton. This will solve two issues since the disposition of the Morrison Farm House has been a long standing open item. The house may have to be brought up to ADA standards, in which case cost may be prohibitive. Tom did receive indication from building inspector that this may not be a requirement for this type of project. Another option is to build a house on the Hebert property. Another suggestion would be to

purchase the entire Hebert property, including the house, and lease it back to the Heberts. Costs and benefits would have to be determined and worked out. The first step would be to get an appraisal of the property.

Andy suggested getting appraisals for the property both with and without the house to move this discussion forward. Peggy said she was hoping this wouldn't drag on too long, but Andy admitted that this process can take some time.

In discussing the option of leasing, Tom noted a similar circumstance with Morrison Property where the Town purchased the property but Betty was allowed to stay on as long as she wanted.

Motion: Terry moved to have an appraisal of the property both with and without the house. Will seconded the motion and the roll count was unanimous.

Tom and Andy will talk about moving the appraisal process forward.

Issue #4: Piper Lane: A site eligibility walk is planned for Sept. 18 at 10AM. The application for a 40B development is under review by the State. The asking price for the Jodka land is \$350K and for the Magoon parcel, \$900K.

The application packet was submitted to Planning on or about Sept. 4. There is a 30 day period for the public to submit comments. The Neighborhood would like OSC to submit a letter to Mass. Housing to push back on this development. Neighborhood is ok with the front parcel but not the back parcel. Andy responded that he could support a letter but the Committee can't get into advocacy. A letter from the OSC would focus on the priority of the land historically for open space. Also cited would be the visible impact, interference with the access trail to Great Hill Conservation Area, and other relevant factors. Will agreed that such a letter would be appropriate. Andy asked for a volunteer to write the letter, but no one volunteered. In the discussion that followed, Andy pointed out that, historically, where the Town has been successful in Open Space purchases, the property owner was open to working with the Committee. This was not the case with this property.

Andy will work with Tom and NR staff to draft the letter.

Issue #5: 180 Newtown Road (Anderson Property):

Review of PCRC Public Hearing of September 4 has been postponed to Oct. 2. This long awaited project will open up the ten acres in the rear of the property that will be added to the existing 22 acres of conservation property. The developer will hopefully honor the prior discussions with Ernie Anderson of putting a small parking lot on the corner of the property and building a boardwalk to access the interior of the property as part of the plan.

A meeting with owners is expected soon.

Issue #6: Acton Dog Park Presentation: Clare Siska

Clare distributed a packet of materials to the Committee. (Included at after page 4.) Tom had taken the Dog Park committee on a tour of 4 parcels under consideration: 1. Quarry Road, 2: Ice House Pond; 3. Arlington St.; 4. 34 School St., Great Hill.

Clare is seeking input on the 4 suggestions:

Will commented that the three acres would be fenced in, which is a factor in the choice of site. He considered Ice House Pond not a good choice for a number of reasons: the need to protect resources; human and animal factors; esthetics; and the proximity to the buffer zone around the pond. He considered these factors rendering this site unusable.

Andy noted that Great Hill is currently being used as dog park and less as recreation area. It has parking and seems to be working.

Andy commented that Arlington St. is a neutral site but there is a need to contact the neighborhood who had strong feelings about the disposition of that property that surfaced in the proposal for siting the Senior Center there.

They would have the advantage of parking proximity but no water access and paths would have to be created.

Quarry Road is general municipal property; it was part of a land swap between Conservation and Municipal to create Miracle field. The bottom portion of the parcel is Municipal, the top remains conservation land. Only the bottom portion would be eligible for the dog park. Advantage of NARA is proximity to parking the ability to control and strongly define the site.

When asked about the parcel behind Trader Joe's, Clare said the committee did not deem it attractive and seems to be "hiding" the park. Susan asked if parking was being featured into the criteria for site consideration. Clare said that sites with 2 acres do not consider parking but sites with 3 or more acres do.

Andy commented that NARA has parking and may make the most sense. Tom could fit it into the south section (3 acres) but it will need clearing.

Susan pointed out the natural resources of the area behind Trader Joe's plaza.

Some additional ideas were to plant trees along the fence which would blend in with the surroundings; including a water feature is important to dog owners; looking at private parcels where owners have excess property, taking an unattractive site and transforming it.

Ideas: blend fence in with trees;

There is a general concern about clearing trees, which is required to some degree on site.

Issue #7: Multiple properties

161 Newtown Road, CR 22: awaiting final signatures

183 Newtown Road: no action

Brucewood Lots: no action

Quarry Road: no action

Stonefield Farm: no action

53 River Street: in committee

Issue #8: New Business: Matt announced that the Water District is in conversation with representatives of Brewster Conant estate to purchase the parcel at Brook and Main Streets parcel adjacent to the current well site. The parcel is comprised of pine forest with uplands and

has been under forestry management plan. The Water District would continue to manage the property.

The Committee will be voting on the purchase and will put together a Warrant article. This is a great addition to the water district and is a high value parcel. All three of the Conant children support this purchase.

Issue #9: Conservation Restrictions, including and especially the Grace Property (on-going). Andy would like an introduction to the new Town Manager and would then initiate discussion of this open item.

Next Meeting – October 5, 2018, 7:30 AM (Acton Town Hall – Room 9)



ADPC@ACTON-MA.GOV

Acton Dog Park Committee

Acton's Dog Park Committee (ADPC) hopes to establish an enclosed, accessible dog park for the benefit of dogs, dog owners, and the public at large.

The ADPC has compared the characteristics of 12 sites proposed for potential use by Acton's Land Use Department with those characteristics cited in the research as desirable for a well-designed dog park.

Desirable Site Characteristics

- Minimum 2 useable acres, + space for parking a minimum of 10 – 20 cars
- Generally flat terrain; some variation welcome
- Established ground cover to sustain repeated use
- Access to potable water (for dogs, humans)
- Access to swimming water (for dogs)
- Natural shade elements or potential to add them
- Reasonable buffer from residential development
- Good pedestrian and vehicular access
- Permeable soil with the ability to manage runoff
- Access to established trail systems
- Proximity to compatible public use facilities

We hope to avoid:

- Areas where wildlife or plant systems are protected, dependent, or fragile
- The need for substantial site clearing (costs)
- Conflicts with existing or planned facilities or users

We are currently considering four potential sites.

We are asking for your input and insights as we narrow down our selection of a preferred site to submit for town approval. Thank you for your time!

- Site Option 1: 70 Quarry Road - GIS C5-3.....pages 3, 4
- Site Option 2: Ice House Pond - GIS 116 Concord Road F4-34.....pages 5, 6
- Site Option 3: 24 Arlington Street & 24 Arlington Street Rear (GIS D3-33 and E3-8).....pages 7, 8
- Site Option 4: 34 School St Great Hill GIS H3-A-1-1.....pages 9, 10

Site Option 1: 70 Quarry Road- GIS CS-3



Pros

- Close proximity to NARA, would extend use of an existing recreation area
- Generally flat terrain; less clearing required than some sites
- Existing town water access
- Parking available at NARA except during large events; a smaller parking area dedicated to the dog park could suffice
- Few abutters (Yin Peet)
- Existing (Town Forest) trails nearby

Cons

- Some question of impact on town forest and existing trails
- Far north end of town location might diminish potential use
- No swimming water for dogs
- Question of waste runoff into NARA pond?
- Single road would lead in/out of area
- No sidewalks

Site Option 2:Ice House Pond- GIS 116 Concord Road F4-34



Pros

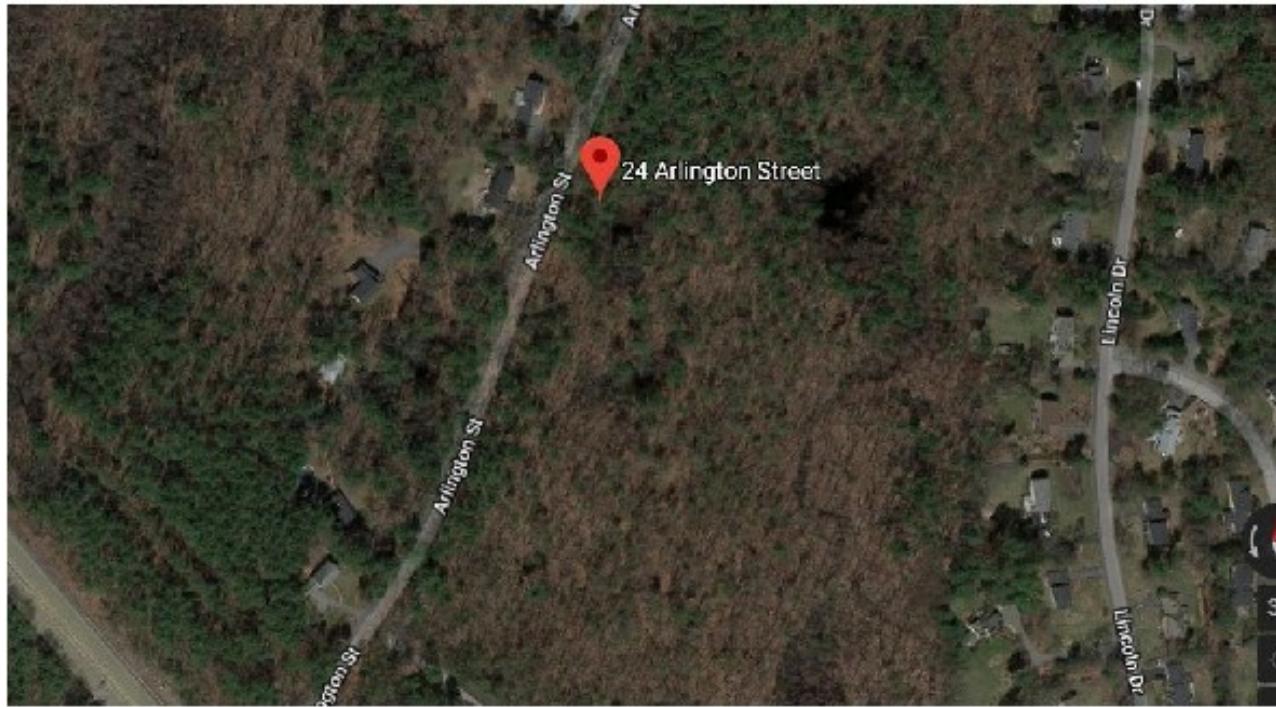
- Centrally located
- Estimated 2 – 3 acres of usable land?
- Existing (newly developed) parking; overflow at Morrison Farm and soccer fields
- Abuts existing trails already used by dogs; planned trail development along Ice House pond
- Isolated from residential
- Access to swimming water for dogs
- Potential access to new Morrison Farm well for human consumption
- Targeted area is hidden from Morrison Farm view by vegetation
- Established turf
- No clearing needed
- Easy access from Rt 2A, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), and Concord Road sidewalks

Cons

- Wetness? Will it be useable year-round?
- Parking may compete with BFRT
- Users/dogs would need to walk trail to get to site
- Community desire to retain natural state of Morrison and surrounding properties?

Site Option 3:

24 Arlington Street & 24 Arlington Street Rear (GIS 0333 and E3B)

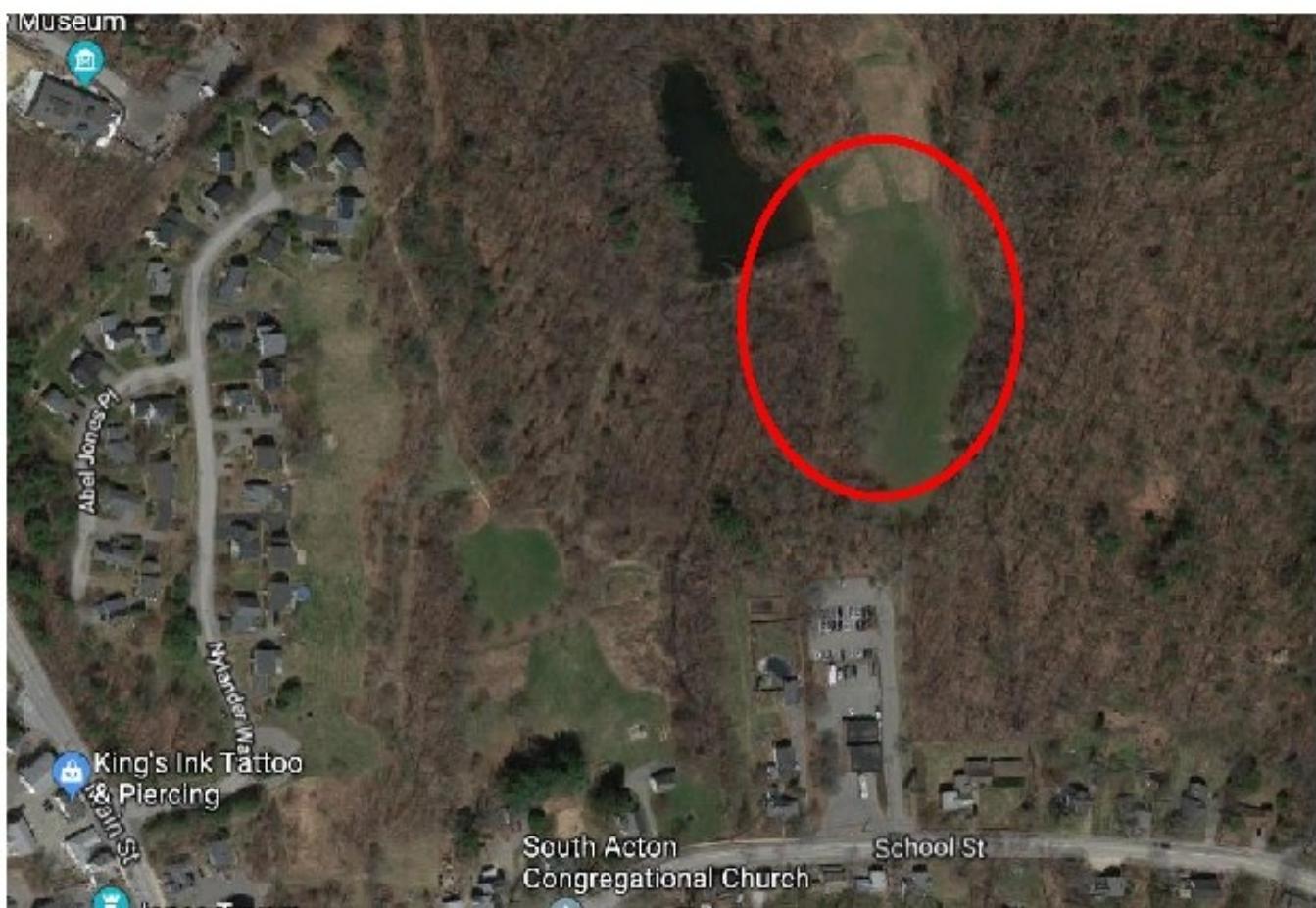


Pros

- Wooded property with existing trails, boulders, easy rolling terrain, shade
- Large size (25 acres) allows for buffer from residential
- Flatter than many properties considered
- Easy access to town water
- Natural area for parking between road and stone wall
- Somewhat central
- Few neighbors
- Nearby conservation land
- Good-sized, public road. Access from multiple directions.

Cons

- No water for dog play
- No sidewalks
- Wooded site would require clearing, ground cover development, parking development
- No existing trails. Nearby conservation land requires road crossing
- Potential for resistance from Lincoln Drive residents?



Pros

- Acton's "unofficial" dog park
- Existing pond and small beach for dog swimming
- Adjacent conservation land and trails
- Reasonable buffer from residential neighbors
- Existing turf; no clearing needed
- Sidewalks on School Street and leading up to park
- Large size
- Good-sized, public road. Access from multiple directions.
- Access to town water

Cons

- limited parking -- in use by commuters
- field used for soccer
- some lower areas are wet
- potential conflict with existing users who wish it to remain untouched
- potential resistance from Nylander Way neighbors
- Far south end area of town may limit use