

TOWN OF ACTON

Open Space Committee

Date: Friday, December 2, 2016

Time: 7:30 AM

Place: Acton Town Hall Room 9

Members: Terry Maitland (acting Chair), Jeff Clymer, Franny Osman, Barbara Epstein, Tom Tidman

Visitors: Dave Marshall & Will Hill, Associate members; Joe Will, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Frank Reis

Issue #1: Minutes of October 6, 2016

Jeff moved to approve the Minutes of Oct. 6, Franny seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

November 4, 2016: This meeting did not have quorum, and minutes are not valid.

A brief discussion was held around associate members. Franny will investigate how to get “associate members” approved by the Selectman so these can be added to charter. There is a need to have associates prepared to assume membership as positions are vacated. In particular, Jeff will perhaps be leaving in spring.

Issue #2: Discussion of Community Preservation Act

Andy provided a copy of the proposed submission which will be presented formally to the Community Preservation Committee on December 8.

Issue #3: River Street Update

A site investigation is underway and should be completed in about a month. Should the findings indicate excessive contamination, the Town will not be forced to purchase the property. O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun_is working for the Town on the assessment. Half of the site is impounded. The area is now dry and the sediment is being examined. There were mills upstream in the past.

Issue #4: Stonefield Farm Update

Andy will call an executive session at the next meeting to review the appraisal. At this time, only he has this information.

Issue #5: Concord Water District Project Update

Franny reported that the BoS hearing for a Special Permit on Sept. 12 was continued to Dec. 14. The main issue now is the fence. Franny, among other Selectmen, walked the fence line. She perceived the fence as annoying

and upsetting for the Breezy Point neighborhood. She doesn't think the fence is a correct thing and makes the lake inaccessible while not really protecting the site.

They are working on getting more information about alternatives. Acton Water considers upgrade a good thing. It is a difficult assessment. There are Acton folks supplied by Concord Water. An environmental expert is looking at the fence to determine the impact. Will asked if anyone had examined the original agreement and suggested they look for leverage. Concord plans to substantially increase its use of the pond water. The agreement states that, should Acton have need of the water, it can revoke Concord's access rights. Acton does have water needs at times. Such a change would have to go through the MA legislature.

Dan Wells, of Stamsky & McNary, is currently doing a wildlife study, due next week.

Issue #6: Arlington Street Petition Update

Frank Reis reported that there will be a citizens meeting with the BoS next Monday. The abutters want it preserved as Open Space. They view it as a good bridge from Grassy Pond to the Anderson parcel. Tom asked if they would be supportive of installing a small parking lot. Frank said there would be no opposition, since they would like to see whole town benefit from the site. Barbara asked how many acres were involved and was told it was about 25 acres. Franny had thought about this as a possible site for a dog park, a segue into the next item.

Issue #7: Discussion of Dog Parks

Tom presented some information he had researched so far. There is a large park in Chelmsford that includes a parking area. There are two parts, one for large dogs and one for small dogs. Natural Resources has already looked at sites. Great Hill has been the de facto park. A fenced area is needed. This may require taking some soccer fields off-line. Recreation is actively investigating this. Two sites are under consideration right now: #1 is the Quarry Road site, a small block of land, about 4 acres, abutting town forest. # 2 is a space behind the Trader Joe's plaza, abutting Esterbrook Road. At this time, there is a leash requirement only for NARA. Owners want to have the park ADA accessible. The Selectmen are putting a committee together to study dog parks.

Joe Will noted that there were two groups advocating for the parks, one group for Great Hill, another for a different site. There is a chart on docushare that lists possible places. The main criteria is space, water, being accessible and approving neighbors.

Issue #8: Discussion of Sustainable CR Stewardship

Susan Mitchell-Hardt presented ACT's concern about the growing administrative effort required to properly manage the Conservation

Restrictions that they have undertaken. There is a legal defense budget which includes one-time costs as well as on-going costs associated with each property. Right now there are 6 plots that they monitor, and they don't have enough volunteers to manage. They are exploring hiring private companies to do the Baseline Documentation Report and On-going monitoring. They have hired "Conservation Works" to do the baseline documentation for 176 Central Street. The work has been substantially completed and is awaiting the installation of bounds in order to complete the report.

ACT needs more volunteers to continue. Americorp volunteers can provide training for monitoring training, which is an annual task. Susan is looking to develop a sustainable approach in order to maintain the growing portfolio of CR lands. The budget for Wright Hill has been approved and approval for 179 Central Street is expected shortly.

Issue #9: The following items were reviewed briefly as information was available:

Piper Lane: No new information was available but Franny noted that the neighbors were still trying to find a way to secure CPC funding. Suggested possibilities have not been acceptable. Tom noted the long, complicated process. Currently the property is listed at \$900, but no potential buyers as yet.

Walker Property: A committee has been formed to examine potential uses. OSC is not directly involved.

64 School Street, no info

Quarry Road: Tony Norton land, adjacent to NARA, holds the potential for access to a rail trail spur for a future trail. The area leads out towards Powers Road, by Rex Lane. She has asked to engage in talks.

Franny moved that OSC should encourage and support the town to undertake serious consideration of this property. Barbara seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Tom will be making contact with Ms. Norton.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35.

Next Meeting – January 6, 2017, 7:30 AM (Acton Town Hall – Room 9)