



OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Friday, October 4, 2019

7:30 AM

Room 9, Town Hall, 472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720

Committee members: Andy Magee, Matthew Mostoller; Will Hill, Dave Marshall. Selectman representative: David Martin.

Visitors: Gene Beresin, Joe Will, Christa Collins, Tom Gillispie, Jeff Chormann, Susan Mitchell-Hardt

Recording Secretary: Fran Portante

I. Regular Business

1. **Minutes of Friday, August 2, 2019 meeting:** pending

Andy announced that Ray Jacoby, Planning Board member, will be appointed liaison to the Open Space Committee (OSC).

Dave Martin, present at today's meeting, has been assigned Board of Selectmen (BoS) liaison.

2. **Review of on-going issues:**

- Hebert Farm: Christa Collins, from SVT, reported that Peggy H. was waiting for an appraiser to give them his results. An Engineering firm had been hired and SVT had offered to pay half, but Peggy H. declined. The Appraiser may be looking to maximize the value of the land, but it was noted that ultimately he would have to be guided by zoning rules.
- Piper Lane: Gene B. discussed the 200 foot long driveway excavation and associated retaining wall included in the plan. In order to avoid infringing on property lines, steel plates would have to be inserted. This could result in the loss of trees whose root systems are impacted by the retaining wall. Abutters are asking for a survey and an assessment by a certified arborist. 40Bs can ask for waivers of local bylaws, but they cannot ignore property rights. Gene asked if the OSC could support the hiring of an arborist to evaluate the impact of wall construction. Andy responded that they would have to ask for any funding from the BoS, since the OSC has no "funds" of their own for such assessments. A letter will be sent to BoS requesting support and some funding. They have a 180 day window to get this done. Andy asks that OSC be copied on the letter and will write a letter in support. The next ZBA meeting is Nov. 5 and Roland has asked that all material be submitted by Oct. 15.

Andy called for a vote to support concept of hiring arborist and surveyor. He also pointed out that the Town of Acton is an abutter; a major conservation area owned by the town is adjacent to the property: It's important to assess the potential of damage. Also, the ZBA has to take private property into account. In further discussion it was pointed out that this would involve a zoning regulation, so the ZBA wouldn't be involved. However, impinging on an easement would be within the ZBA's purview.

Motion: Will made a motion for Andy to write a letter in support of hiring an arborist/surveyor. Matt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- 180 Newtown Road: no new information
- 108 Nonset Path: no new information
- Wetherbee Street: Susan reported that the owners have put up 32 Wetherbee Street for sale. They are not in a hurry to sell the larger, undeveloped property. Susan would like to know the result of last year's appraisal. Susan also reminded everyone that Natalie and Norm Deloury will be showing off their team of oxen on Sunday, October 13. Message from Susan: Please join the Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) and landowners of the Wetherbee Woods for an old fashioned logging demonstration using their heritage breed oxen. You will meet Natalie and Norm, and their team, "Phil" & "Kent", learn about Randall Oxen, how to train and care for them, their special yokes, and why they are the "green" way to help manage a forest.

3. Acton Dog Park Proposal:

Tom Gillespie; Vice Chair of the Acton Dog Park Committee, updated the committee on the current proposals that had been presented BoS. They have been collecting input from Committees and citizens throughout the town over the last year. There are two proposals for sites for the park. Plan A is to use 75 Quarry Road, a parcel to the right of Miracle field which would repurpose the existing Public Works property to accommodate the dog park. Access to the park would be directly off of Quarry Rd. The existing Kennedy Easement has to be moved. Discussions are underway. Plan B would access the other side of Quarry Rd. The upper part of the property is owned by DPW but the lower part is being considered as a possible site. This site would require significant tree-removal. It abuts town forest and would affect Wills Hole trails. This is not their first choice and they know it is not the ideal site. When asked about access to water, Tom G. explained that they were looking to have water piped to the Plan A site.

The OSC strongly preferred the Plan A site, particularly in light of the need for extensive tree removal on the Plan B parcel. Tom G. explained that the public forum strongly influenced their final choices. Tony Norton had suggested the Plan A site. They will be bringing this before the BoS again in the future. Other boards and committees are sending letters of support or opposition.

Andy suggested sending a letter of support for Plan A but not Plan B. Selectman Dave Martin. noted that the BoS did have a strong concern that the DPW would be limited in the use of space to support their operations, if Plan A was adopted and would likely expand into the undeveloped portion of the DPW site. Andy said the OSC would support Plan A as long as no open space is impacted further, and he will bring a draft of a letter of support to the next meeting. And Dave will convey the sentiment of the OSC at the next BoS meeting on Monday.

3. Brief Review of the following as necessary:

- 183 Newtown Road: Susan M-H. and Tom T were planning on meeting with the current owner at noon to determine what the owner wants to do with the property.
- Brucewood Lots,: n/a
- Stonefield Farm: n/a
- 53 River Street,n/a
- Triangle Farm: This is an area comprised of a group of properties abutting Camp Acton and Springhill, and Robbins Mill. The owner of 10, 20 and 21 Triangle Farm Lane is Ronald Ansin.

Susan has been unable to contact the owner. It was suggested that a letter from the OSC would be worthwhile. Andy had put together a letter which he distributed to the Committee to review explaining the Committee's interest in the property (see Attachment). The Committee was in favor of sending the letter as submitted.

Motion: Will moved to approve the letter and send it to Mr. Ansin. Matt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- 34 School Street: Re-purchase of Municipal Right-of-Way: Michaela Moran had asked for direction from the OSC and was told to take her question to the Conservation Commission and BoS.

II. New/Special Business

1. CPA: Andy will put together a draft of requests for the next meeting.
2. Nagog Pond: Matt: reported that Concord is concerned they will wind up with an "isolated" unusable water supply, and if the Court ruled for Littleton, Concord would consider selling.
3. Conant Land: Matt is planning public land walk sometime in November.

III. Consent Items

None

Next Meeting: Friday, November 1, 2019, 7:30 AM
Room 9, Town Hall, 472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 AM.

Additional materials can be found here: None

The listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need, including as much detail as you can and include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow advance notice. Send an e-mail to manager@actonma.gov or call Town Manager's Office (978)929-6611

For more information about the Open Space Committee contact Tom
Tidman at ttidman@acton-ma.gov or (978) 929-6634.



TOWN OF ACTON

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Open Space Committee

DRAFT

October 4, 2019

Mr. Ronald Ansin
Stones Throw Trust
c/o Sandra A. Craig
1 Main Street
Leominster, MA 01453

RE: Triangle Farm Properties

Dear Mr Ansin:

I am writing you on behalf of the Town of Acton Open Space Committee for the purpose of exploring your interest in the protection of the properties you own at 10, 20, and 21 Triangle Farm Lane in Acton, Massachusetts.

By way of introduction, the Town of Acton Open Space Committee is an advisory committee to the Board of Selectman. The mission of the Open Space Committee is to act as an advocate for the protection of open space within the town and to identify the funding for such land protection efforts. With assistance from local and regional land protection organizations, including the Acton Conservation Trust and the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Committee works closely with land owners looking to preserve and protect their lands. Such efforts may include the direct purchase of land for conservation, or the purchase of Conservation Restrictions, whereby the land owner maintains ownership of the property, but sells the development rights, again for conservation purposes. In Acton, these purchases have been completed primarily with funds accrued through the Community Preservation Act.

As you are undoubtedly aware, Triangle Farm Lane abuts almost 600 acres of contiguous conservation lands, including the Camp Acton, Spring Hill, Robins Mill, and Nashoba Brook properties. In addition to their natural beauty and resources, these parcels of land are known for their abundant historic and prehistoric resources. A number of public trails are located within these lands, with some extending outward and connecting to properties in Carlisle and Westford. Indeed, the Bay Circuit Trail, an approximately 230-mile long trail running from Newburyport to Kingston Massachusetts, passes through the Springhill and Nashoba Brook properties.

The Open Space Committee would be pleased to meet with you and/or your representative in order to introduce ourselves to you and to explore any potential interest you may have in the protection of the above properties. Such a meeting need only be informal. The Committee fully recognizes that land owners may have a number of specific plans and goals for their lands. Our goal is merely to introduce owners of significant open space parcels to the potential for preserving their land as open space and to explore whether such an outcome would be compatible with their goals.

We thank you for your consideration of the above proposal to meet. Should you be willing and interested in such a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me through the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department at the above number, or by email at andrew839.magee@gmail.com.

Respectfully yours,

DRAFT

Andrew D. Magee, Chair

Town of Acton Open Space Committee