

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2017 at the HW Library

Present: Gretel Clark, Anne Gero, Rosemary Kennedy, Emer McCourt

Also present: Richard Boroff

The meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m. It was announced that Mr. Boroff would be taping the meeting. Previous meeting minutes were briefly discussed. The Minutes of the November 25, 2016 and the December 10, 2016 meetings were approved unanimously. It was decided to defer approval to the minutes of the December 7, 2016 meeting until the next meeting so that comments could be incorporated.

Anne Gero provided an overview of the Conservation Commission's meeting that had taken place the evening before (Jan 11, 2017.) George Tarr had proposed the creation of a permanent conservation restriction of the 9.1 acres designated to Open Space at the Patton Homestead. However, the Town Counsel advised that it is sufficiently protected as is and both Keith Glidden and Anne Gero had reviewed it from a legal perspective and agreed so the Conservation Committee decided no action was required. It was also decided to invite the Town Manager to the next Conservation Commission meeting for discussion of areas such as the Canoe Launch.

The OSC members then discussed the development of an ad hoc working task force potentially consisting of Recreation Department, Town Manager, Greenbelt, ECTA and some representatives of the OSC, to discuss possibilities for the Patton Homestead Open Space (as previously discussed at Open Space Committee meetings). The Preliminary Draft information has been shared with the Conservation Commission who have approved it. The OSC voted unanimously to release the draft information to the Town of Hamilton and invite public discussion. Mr. Boroff raised Open Meeting Law concerns about such an ad hoc working task force. Anne Gero agreed to research this issue

A short discussion of the Central Street parcel followed. The Conservation Commission feels that there were some maintenance issues. The OSC concluded that while the Central Street parcel has intrinsic value as additional Open Space it is not a high priority agenda item currently for the OSC. Gretel Clark will follow up with Jeannie Durant (sic?) get a sense of the vision for the parcel.

Anne Gero reported her findings regarding the recent deletion of the provision to the zoning bylaws. Anne maintained that the deletion of the provision removed absolute prohibition of a crossing of wetlands or lands subject to flooding by driveways or roadways. Instead decisions are left to the discretion of the Conservation Commission on a case by case basis. The Conservation Commission have confirmed this. The OSC voted unanimously to send a letter to the Planning Board requesting the reinstatement to the 2016 Bylaws , Section 1.B. that had been removed at the suggestion of Attorney Browbowski. Anne Gero was authorized to draft and send the letter by all present. The provision had been intentionally added to the zoning by-laws in the 1980's and the OSC consider it valuable.

A brief review of the status of the OSC's draft comment letter to the revised Open Space and Recreation Plan followed. The addition of the positive feedback about the importance and value of the preservation of Open Space from the 2016 Town survey should be incorporated. The Town of Ipswich has updated their Open Space Plan and it is worth reviewing too. It was noted that there is some overlap with the T of H Recreation Department. Anne Gero suggested reaching out to Sean Timmons to discuss the overlap & the possible incorporation of the Hamilton Recreation Master Plan into the OSRP. The OSC members unanimously approved Anne Gero contacting Sean Timmons with this suggestion. Anne Gero agreed to revise draft comment letter to the revised Open Space and Recreation Plan for further discussion at next meeting

The next Open Space Committee Meeting will take place on Monday, January 23, 2017 at the HW Library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.