

Meeting Minutes – September 15, 2016
West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC)
Town Hall, 140 Worcester St., West Boylston, MA

Members Present: Brenda Bowman, Ray DeSanti, Gary Flynn, Mike Peckar, Barbara Wyatt, Vin Vignaly.

Members Absent: John Hadley

Others Present: Robert Dunne-WB Parks Commission

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vignaly at 6:00 pm. On a motion by Ms. Wyatt and a second from Mr. Peckar, the minutes of the 7/19/16 meeting and the 6/2/16 Public Forum for the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update were unanimously approved as written.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP):

Mr. Vignaly noted that Ms. Mucciarone will not be in attendance to save costs as the project proceeds, but he will try to compile the comments and forward everything along.

Mr. Dunne began with a review of the sections that the Parks Commission had reviewed and some changes and additions to the Action Items. He noted with regret that the Parks Commission accepted the resignation of the Director of Recreation, Jen Breen at their meeting on Monday. He said he would go through the Recreation section in the next week or so as best he can. The Parks section will recommend facilities, management, and organizational issues review and improvements. Mr. Dunne noted that the Parks Commission voted to endorse the Goodale Park Master Plan and accept the work as complete. There were significant questions regarding the phasing, costs, and prioritization of facilities and he responded that there is a lot of great information on each venue and the Commission is going to be determining which venues are current priorities and which portions move forward. This is like all other town Master Plans and is only a guide to be used for decision-making. Some Action Items to be included should be to define the different town parks and recreation agents' jurisdiction, protocols, and authority, including the Open Space Implementation Committee, Parks Commission and Parks Facilities Committee.

A timeline for moving forward was discussed with 9/23-comments are due, 10/12-final draft OSRP circulated to Parks Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and a single page summary sheet/invite to Public Forum from Ms. Mucciarone, 10/17-OSIC members at Town Meeting to talk about Public Forum and answer questions, 10/24-Public Forum, 10/30-Comments submittal deadline, 11/15-Final OSRP Draft for Selectmen/PIBd/CMRPC approvals, 12/15 Send package to MassDCS for acceptance.

Ms. Bowman noted many references to Malden Brook Farm that need to be corrected. Mr. Vignaly will review that, and also reported that no volunteer has stepped forward to review compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act review, as a documented 'handicapped user'.

Mr. Peckar requested a high priority be set on providing a dog park. He suggested working with DCR to create a dog park to take the load away from the Wachusett Rail Trail in town. Mr. Flynn suggested that the Water District might support this, since the area is directly abutting the Oakdale Wells. He will ask the District at their next meeting. An Action Item to seriously investigate a municipal dog park should be included and discussed. A potential location suggested by Ms. Bowman was a 3.5-acre site north Goodale Street almost across from Phelps Place.

Ms. Wyatt wanted to be sure the OSRP includes Action Items to support a Visitors Center in town, possibly in cooperation with DCR at their 180 Beaman Street office, or include it as part of the Historic Society building on Worcester Street.

Issues noted that need to be included in the OSRP: work with Wachusett Greenways to improve the trailhead at the Rail Trail for more parking and local info; improve bicycle/pedestrian access along Thomas Street, Temple Street, Crescent Street, and Route 12 at railroad underpass; and support the addition of interpretive trails along the Rail Trail to old historic sites; identify and summarize the process to more expeditiously utilize Community Preservation Committee money to complete 'due diligence' work before requesting purchase of land at a Town Meeting.

Mr. Vignaly noted that the OSRP needs to clearly present the supporting evidence from the Parks Commission that the demands for field space in town warrant additions to existing fields. Most townspeople drive by and see nobody in the parks most of the time. We will need to provide better documentation showing that improved management has occurred and there still are high demands that require additional field space.

Ms. Bowman made comments that focused on the need for parks and recreation facilities for seniors and simply safe walking opportunities for seniors.

Open Space Protection Acquisitions Potential Property List:

Mr. Peckar reported that the Town has completed the acquisition of about 13 acres of land in the rear of 263 Maple Street, and the Greater Worcester Land Trust has acquired a 12-acre property (Malden Hill South) owned by Dennis Minnich on Goodale Street which will be on the October Town Meeting Warrant for the town to acquire.

Ms. Bowman asked to have the area of actual "open space" owned by the town clearly noted because townspeople don't realize almost all is owned by DCR. Members suggested adding these properties to the committee's already-existing list of Properties of Interest for Acquisition for inclusion into the OSRP Update: 25 acres on west side of Laurel Street, a 4-acre parcel on Woodland Street south of Danielian Drive, the rear portion of Wayne's Weaponry property off Laurel Street, and the 11 acres in the rear of 405A Prospect Street.

The OSIC will work with CMRPC to prepare a 3-minute PowerPoint presentation report and a single-page handout for the 10/17 Town Meeting to describe the purpose, highlights, and invite the public to the Public Forum to offer ideas and suggestions. The final draft should be available for review on the town website, copies in the library, emailed to Selectmen, Planning Board, Parks Commission, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Water District, and Counsel on Aging, and others who may be interested.

Next meeting was suggested as Thursday, October 13, 2016 at 6 pm to review the final draft and prepare for Town Meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Wyatt, and seconded by Mr. Flynn, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Vincent Vignaly