

Meeting Minutes – November 22, 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: Barur Rajeshkumar, Jim Pedone and Robert Dunne-WB Parks Commission, Michelle Brown, Vanessa Kuzmanovski

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vignaly at 6:03 pm. On a motion by Ms. Wyatt, seconded by Mr. Flynn, the minutes of the 10/24/16 meeting were unanimously approved.

**Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP):**

The latest draft of the OSRP from October and the 11/21/16 email from Matt Franz from CMRPC compiling the town property and other open spaces within town were discussed. In summary, the list from the 9/15/16 meeting and the current preferences of the OSIC were:

- a. Include Action Items 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; and protocols such as a parks usage schedule on Parks' website, and pesticide application notification.
- b. Include a discussion and Action Items for the Parks Commission relative to the Goodale Park Master Plan implementation, including phasing, costs, and prioritization of facilities based on current priorities and realistic financing. It is a guide to be used for decision-making.
- c. Mr. Vignaly noted that no volunteer has stepped forward to review compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act review, as a documented 'handicapped user'. One volunteer has not responded to emails for coordination and direction.
- d. Mr. Peckar asked that a new high priority Action Item should be included to proceed with creation of a town dog park facility. Results from the surveys should be used in a narrative discussion with explanation that DCR prohibits dogs from their properties and pet owners are using the recently fenced areas of the baseball field, softball field, and tennis courts. And they are not picking up the feces, which children and other users are forced to address. Potential locations suggested were: a 3.5-acre DCR property on the south side of Goodale Street almost across from Phelps Place, and town properties located at 19 Crescent Street or Tivnan Drive.
- e. Ms. Wyatt wanted to be sure the OSRP includes discussion and an Action Item 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.
- f. The narrative and Action Items should include cooperating with Wachusett Greenways to improve the trailhead parking at the Mass Central Rail Trail and support the addition of interpretive trails along the Rail Trail to old historic sites and extension of the trail to Sterling.
- g. The narrative and Action Items should include suggestions for the Complete Streets program to insure improved bicycle/pedestrian access along Thomas Street, Temple Street, Crescent Street, and Route 12 at the railroad underpass.
- h. The narrative and Action Items should include identification of the process to more expeditiously utilize Community Preservation Act funds to complete 'due diligence' work before requesting purchase of lands or development restrictions on lands at Town Meeting.
- i. The narrative and Action Items should clearly present the supporting evidence from the Parks Commission that the demands for available field space justify any requests for additional fields. Most townspeople drive by and see nobody in the parks most of the time. Show that improved management has occurred and there still are high demands that require additional field space.

- j. The narrative and Action Items should describe the survey results and the desire for recreation facilities for seniors and to provide safe walking opportunities for seniors and youngsters.
- k. The narrative and tables should clearly include all state entities owning land in town, including DCR, DCAM (180 Beaman Street), MassDOT (I-190), and County Sheriff. A table should be included for these and DCR-owned properties (including lands under water, unless the DCS requires it differently) and note County/Sheriff properties on Tivnan and off River Road as being public parcels and determine how much should be considered open space versus facilities such as the jail. All references to the percentage of 'State-owned' land in town should include land under water and appears to be more than 43%, but a table would be good.
- l. The narrative and tables should include the Town-owned properties that were included in Mr. Vignaly's email of 11/22/16, and these should be listed as 'open space' or not. Addition of the area of the town roadways in a table is needed.
- m. The narrative, a table, and Figure should be included depicting all 768.22 acres in Chapter lands, with each type (61, 61A, and 61B) colored separately and not by individual parcel. This figure could also include all state-owned property as well as the campground and golf course-like open spaces, if it is not too confusing.
- n. Map from CMRPC Franz shows Route 140 as State-owned, but it is not; do not use the blue of water as one of the colors; and why include Bethlehem Bible Church.

Discussion with Mr. Rajeshkumar that the Parks Facilities Committee members have not received the notices or invitations that the OSIC has sent to meetings regarding the OSRP Update work. Mr. Vignaly will contact the Town Administrator and repeat the request to distribute our invitations since they no longer have an email listing on the town's website.

The next draft of the OSRP update should include 5 hard-copies for review, which made commenting much easier for some members.

### **Dog Park Discussions**

Michelle Brown reviewed the information she has collected regarding local small towns implementing dog park facilities in the last few years. She contacted dog park organizers in the towns of Millbury, Sharon, Maynard and Medway. She connected with Vanessa Kuzmanovski, who is present and just moved to town from Millbury where she was very involved in their dog park creation/operation efforts. Ms. Kuzmanovski explained that Millbury has more than twice West Boylston's population and their park was also for Sutton residents. They charged a \$5 fee and issued a special tag for the dogs to be able to use their facility. The facility is about 1.5 acres fenced in, with dog 'equipment', a pavilion, water, port-a-jon, and a 3-car gravel parking area. The fencing has a solar powered gate system to reduce the risk of loose dogs. They typically have only 1 or two dogs per day at the site in Millbury. Ms. Brown will follow the issues and progress of the dog parks in Worcester, which have been in the paper recently. The town should contact Kelley Freda at the DCR to see if she might be able to provide assistance. Mr. Vignaly said the Planning Board's engineering consultant, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc., offered assistance since they recently completed a similar project west of Boston.

Ms. Kuzmanovski said the Millbury group received funding through the Stanton Foundation for 90% of the costs. The stipulations for the funding were that a 5 member committee was needed with one member being a paid town employee, the site had to have water, and facility had to be handicapped accessible. She said the parks are mostly owned by the town and managed through the Conservation Commissions or the Parks Department. Questions of liability were discussed as being similar to any other issues occurring at a town park. Ms. Brown said that the disputes that have gone to court have been civil actions between personal parties and did not include the municipalities. Mr. Pedone

suggested the regulations be as strict as possible in the beginning since relaxing them will likely be easier than toughening them after things get going.

Ms. Kuzmanovski said the Millbury group raised \$17,000.00 of the \$170,000.00 needed for their 1.5 acre park. Most of the cost went to the fencing and gates, but they also have water features and a pavilion. Mr. Vignaly asked to get any plans that they might have and the minutes from their meeting where they discussed how they would have done things differently if they knew better.

Mr. Peckar suggested that CPA funding can be used for the dog park and will confirm it with the CPC. He thought we should see if we can get more interest in this sub-committee, which might become the needed 5-member committee for the funding. Ms. Kuzmanovski suggested that a town employee contact the Stanton Foundation to get the details of what is needed. A town employee is the only one they will speak with to start the process. Additionally, Mr. Dunne noted that using CPA monies might prohibit the town from limiting access to only townspeople. He suggested contacting Town Counsel to verify if this is the case.

Ms. Kuzmanovski said the Millbury group found that public hearings divided the town because of competing interests for the land and the fear of noise from the neighbors. She suggested that keeping it a sand lot, instead of grass or mulch, reduces the maintenance, but Mr. Pedone noted his experience is that it is not maintenance-free. There were poison ivy issues in Millbury, and it is a self-policing area, with complaints forwarded to the committee. Mr. Rajeshkumar raised concerns over town liability and wanted to see more research and expects that Town Counsel will need to confirm the issues.

The location on Tivnan Drive is close to Boylston and they may be interested in a cooperative project. West Boylston has less than 7,000 people, and even with the 4,000 in Boylston, it is less than the Millbury population. Ms. Bowman will lead this sub-committee and volunteered to find out how many dogs are licensed in West Boylston and Boylston. Other sub-committee volunteers were Mr. Peckar, Ms. Brown, and Ms. Kuzmanovski, as best she can with a newborn. Others are welcome to assist.

Mr. Vignaly will contact Ms. Lucier to ask who may be best to contact the Stanton Foundation to get the details needed to proceed.

Mr. Flynn reviewed requested changes he received from the Water District. A line in the second paragraph under Water Supply should read "fields has one active well and two 'abandoned' wells, which were closed in 1985 due to 'a high iron level.'" Manganese was not a reason for abandoning these wells.

Ms. Bowman saw the Selectmen's minutes of 11/2/16 which included a list of requests to Holy Cross for their property at 1000 Goodale Street. She asked that we add a request for limited public access to use the old trail that could connect the newly-acquired Malden Hill South property, which is across Goodale Street, all the way north to River Road. A once popular cross country ski trail.

Next meeting was suggested as Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at 6 pm to review the final draft and prepare for a Public Forum in late January on the OSRP Update.

Upon a motion by Mr. Peckar, and seconded by Mr. DeSanti, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Vincent Vignaly