

Public Forum Meeting Minutes – June 2, 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, Vin Vignaly

Members Absent: John Hadley, Barbara Wyatt

Others Present: Robert Dunne and Jim Pedone-WB Parks Commission, Danielle Mucciarone-CMRPC, Anita Scheipers-Town Administrator, others from the sign-in sheet.

The OSIC meeting was called to order by Chair Vignaly at 6:05 pm.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATE PUBLIC FORUM:

Ms. Mucciarone, a contracted consultant from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), began the Public Forum with a presentation of the intent and purpose of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update. The hope is to review current conditions and discuss action items that can be prioritized as steps going forward. Public comments were encouraged throughout the forum.

Ms. Mucciarone reviewed the process used for the Town-wide survey and noted that thus far she has received 157 responses to the Open Space and Recreation Survey thus far. . The committee would like to get as much feedback as possible for this update.

Mr. Pedone, Chairman of the Parks Commission, gave a summary of the historical and current uses of the Parks facilities. He listed the recent accomplishments and noted that the Goodale Park Master Plan project was completed. The recommendations from which are being reviewed for incorporation into the Parks Commission's planning. The OSRP update at this time will provide a good opportunity to evaluate these recommendations and incorporate the most feasible aspects into the OSRP for the next 7 years. The greatest need to for one more multipurpose field to stop the overuse of the existing fields.

Mr. Vignaly, Chairman of the Open Space Implementation Committee, explained that the Town only owns approximately 1% of its land area as open space. The extensive open space available in town (approximately 40%) is owned by the Mass DCR Water Supply Protection (DCR) and has use limitations in place to protect the reservoir as a drinking water supply for Metropolitan Boston. The interests of the OSIC are to protect what little Town-owned open space exists and encourage private land owners to permanently protect their property.

Mr. DeSanti pointed out that the little Town-owned open space in West Boylston is being claimed by other municipal uses such as the Police Station and Senior Center. Once it has buildings on it, the land never reverts back to 'open space'.

Ms. Mucciarone encouraged all town boards and residents involved with parks and open space, including the Parks Facilities Planning Committee, to become more involved in the preparation of this OSRP update. It is required for many of the State grants and funding, and projects included in the OSRP will qualify higher in the comparative scoring applications for grants and funding.

Mr. Johnson said he never heard about the survey and thought its distribution was limited to those familiar with this effort and not toward the general public. Ms. Mucciarone explained where the survey was available. The

survey will remain available online for another couple of weeks to get more responses from all concerned citizens.

Citizen Comments:

- desire for more outlets for passive and active recreation spaces
- Pool as #1 survey need shocked one resident-past usage was limited, hours were limited, costs are extremely high, construction and operation by a 3rd party is a possibility, and there was a question of liability.
- Increase playground usage and organized events (referenced a summer playground/youth rec program in her hometown that involved arts and crafts, playing kickball; etc. and it was run at **no cost** to town residents).
- Coordinate survey distribution to the school system to increase the younger age group response numbers.
- Include recreational facilities/passive trails within new construction projects that might incorporate it. i.e. playground with the police station and at Mixer.
- Idea of placing the senior center overlooking the park (On land on the south side of Newton Street across from the old Pine Grove).
- Incorporate the Senior Center into a larger facility in Goodale Park to provide easy event viewing by seniors, restrooms, meeting rooms, snack shack, and a view of Wachusett Reservoir.
- Cooperate with DCR to acquire land for municipal facilities, either gift or trade.
- Wachusett Greenways works in partnerships with the DCR and cautioned the representatives to be cautious of “shaking [the DCR] up” to pressure them to use or acquire DCR land. Resident gave example of mountain bikers who were recklessly biking on DCR land and the DCR locked down.
- High priority to increase parking and easy access to athletic venues for elders and handicapped.
- Increase opportunities for adult athletics from just a women’s softball league. The example of an “elder playground” with equipment made for elderly patrons was raised and should be investigated.
- There’s currently an ad hoc dog park at the fenced-in High School baseball field where people just let their dogs run. A better plan for this use should be included.

Next meeting was suggested as Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 6 pm. Upon a motion by Mr. Flynn, and seconded by Mr. DeSanti, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Vincent Vignaly