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12/07/2011 Minutes

OPEN SPACE Committee

Meeting - Wednesday, December 7, 2011

MINUTES Revised/approved Jan. 4, 2012

Present: Ann LeRoy, Chair; David White, Joey Glushko, Patsy Kraemer, Elizabeth Karpati, Jane Auger, Lisa Decker

Guests: Wayne Chouinard, Town Engineer; Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Transportation Advisory Committee

Absent: Leslie Mayer, Michele Hassler, Teresa DeBenedictis

- Downy Square – Elisabeth reported that during the planning process for improving the traffic flow, the Transportation Advisory Committee discovered that there is a swath of land that is town property. This piece of land could be developed as a small open space. Now that the house is gone from the site, there is a big pit.

Lisa observed that to make the land usable, it needs to be raised up. That would require talking to the landowner next door to get permission to bring in fill and even out the landscape. Lisa Decker had developed a preliminary usage design, including a bench, street trees.

The Transportation Advisory Committee is close to completing their redesign of the intersection. The hope is to have construction next year. They have been soliciting input from people who live near the intersection and from groups such as Open Space.

One improvement under discussion is enhanced lighting along Park Avenue from Mass. Ave. to Downy Square.

CDBG money has been used for the design phase and Chapter 90 funds may be used for the implementation.

There is a memorial at the corner of Bow and Lowell. There is a sign that commemorates the naming of the square. There may be a recommendation to move the memorial to this new green space. The committee has been in touch with a member of the Downy family who still lives in Arlington. The memorial is very small and has been nicely maintained.

- Linear Park Project – Ann gave a quick overview of the history of the Linear Park concept for the guests. A report has been developed, looking at the challenges and the opportunities of the project. The committee wants to bring attention to the possibility of this resource. The Brigham's construction project has given an opportunity for an enhanced pocket park along the Brook at this site.

The committee is hoping to meet with the ARB to discuss the project.

Wayne wondered about having a master plan for the linear park and trying to get it approved by the powers that be as a guideline for future development. The concept of the linear park is in the Open Space plan. The town itself does not have a master plan. The Planning Department is starting the development of a master plan.

- The Open Space Plan – Ann stated that is on "hold" since we have an extension until 2014. We need to keep track of all the activities related to the plan.
- David reported that they are still collecting items for the Walking Book of Arlington's Open Spaces. This is a project of the Conservation Commission. The previous book was done in 1994. The commission is working on updating it.
- Reports –

*Busa Farm – the Lexington Board of Selectmen is still grappling with the proposals for Busa Farm. There has been some recent push for more affordable housing than what was originally recommended by the designated committee, which focused primarily on community farming.

*Arlington Reservoir – someone has "poached" some of the newly planted shrubs at the habitat garden. Water chestnut harvesting has

been taking place at the Reservoir, but needs to be done every year; however the harvesting process was destructive to the banks in the summer of 2011. Some thought will have to be given to a different approach next year to forestall that. Wayne offered to have someone from their office take a look at the problem area and give input to the ConCom.

* Rain Garden - The Mystic River Watershed Association has received money to establish two rain gardens in Arlington. An initial meeting was held to discuss this. Possible sites for the rain gardens and who would maintain the gardens were topics of this meeting.

*Joey suggested that we might keep an eye on Wright-Locke Farm in Winchester as there is discussion of development.

*Symmes – we will have to also keep an eye on the Symmes project as it moves forward.

- Ann reported that Wednesday, January 25th will be the Land Trust's annual meeting. She said that the Land Trust is moving its focus towards the Mugar land. The meeting will be at the Senior Center.
- The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 4, 2012.

Respectfully submitted
Patsy Kraemer
January 7, 2012