



Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 8, 2016, 7:30 pm

Town Hall Annex, SECOND FLOOR

Present: Brian Kelder, Ann LeRoy, Wendy Richter, Nat Strosberg, Elena Bartholomew, John Pickle, David White

Absent: Teresa DeBenedictis, Jane Auger, Kelsey Cowan

Guests: Elisabeth Carr-Jones (proposed Vision 2020 liaison), Forrest Snyder

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:30pm.

The minutes from November 17 were reviewed and approved with changes to attendees.

Take a Walk/Connecting Arlington's Open Spaces (Kelsey)

The new logo was enthusiastically reviewed by the committee – and accepted. Final step is to get updated East Arlington route map with help from Adam Kurowski and then post it on website with publicity/notices –

Elisabeth brought a map created by the “Walking in Arlington” group to begin sharing resources with the OSC (see <http://www.walkinginarlington.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Favorite-Places-map.pdf>)

East Arlington walking tour with historian/guide Ed Gordon to be postponed until spring.

Continued discussion of Heights walking routes, new ideas, and next steps. Challenges for selecting walking routes over a large area: North of Mass Ave Heights (hilly), Mass Ave (valley), South of Mass Ave Heights (hilly). Maybe have more than one map and rank walks as easy, moderate, strenuous. Connecting open spaces should be one of the primary goals, but using a topographic map will help identify corridors that may be useful to consider (David will share a pdf of an Arlington topo map). Include parts of Lexington – Reservoir in particular.

Set up a community meeting in March to get input from neighbors, local businesses, etc., as we did in East Arlington.

Picture Post at the Reservoir, other new sites (John Pickle) – will be discussed after John’s Winter Break from teaching.

CPA Project Applications for FY2018

OSC Letter of Support for Park and Rec/Con Com Master Plan for the Reservoir; final paperwork has been completed according to David White. Question – has Lexington been

contacted (ConComm and abutters)? Request initial funding \$100K from CPA to assess Reservoir area (surveying and assess current conditions of reservoir) to make recommendations to improve Res resources.

OSC Letter of Support for Mystic River Watershed Association Pilot Project for improvements to Mill Brook and Wellington Park land between Brattle St and Grove St (minimally altered section of Mill Brook). The goal is to make better pedestrian connections with the bike path, too.

Town is requesting CPA funds to improve Whittemore Park (part of Phase 2 project to improve Mass Ave).

Town and historic groups are requesting CPA funds to update local historic resources inventory of about 1100 public and private properties. 300 resources have already been identified as incorrect.

Updates on current CPA projects:

Spy Pond Erosion Control (Con Com): Phase II being developed for FY2018 to implement suggested changes from Phase I work currently being completed with Phase I CPA funds in FY2017. Recommendations need to be completed by March to present at Town Meeting in April.

Robbins Farm (Park and Rec): landscaping and irrigation and new path plus all-purpose court. Community garden will be renovated. Won't be changing look, feel, and purpose of park, but it will improve access. Ground will need to go through two growing seasons, so park will be offline for quite a while (no sports, sledding...)

Elisabeth noted that the 2018 Vision 2020 survey will have questions about residents' preferences regarding CPA projects.

News and Reports

Mugar development – under ZBA review and state appeals process (to challenge state housing court's rejection of 1.5% of Arlington's land area used for affordable housing) – It will take many months in the court system to work this out, so the project is on hold until a final decision is made.

Oil truck spill in Mystic River: complete restoration and remediation of shoreline, including plantings (Conservation Commission and Planning Department are overseeing the work; funding has been approved).

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015-2022)

Develop a simple method for tracking action items and accomplishments on-line (i.e., Google Sheets with links to websites and Google Docs) – to support updating the OSC Plan every seven years. Need two ways to organize information/coding of 75 action items (Chapter 9 of the Plan):

- a) work with master list with codes but regroup as needed to view it differently; may have more than one link to each piece of information
- b) track individual topics which cannot be regrouped

Still working on what works best for creating a template we can use to organize our information tracking; key is to be able to regroup information. We want it to be relatively simple and see what becomes important (already we know dates are critical). Pivot tables appear to be useful; Word Press is also a possibility. Wendy, Brian, and John to work on ideas and samples for next meeting.

Guest Forrest Snyder asked about public access to Town playing fields and other open spaces, since many areas seem to be prioritized for organized sports groups rather than general access. Public awareness and education is a key goal of OSC, not management of specific sites. Other committees do have certain prioritized groups (such as Parks and Rec for youth sports teams). He was encouraged to talk with Recreation Department about his concerns.

2017 Meeting Dates (4th Thursdays)

January 26, February 23, March 23, April 27, May 25, June 22