



## Open Space Committee

Date: Thursday, January 28, 2021.

Time: 7:30 PM.

Location: Conducted by Zoom remote participation

### Meeting Minutes

Present: Ann LeRoy, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Brian Kelder, Phil Lasker, Emily Nink, Wendy Richter, David White, Emily Sullivan, Zach Vailllette, Krista Moravec (Horsley Witten), and Lena Porell (Horsley Witten).

Absent: Teresa DeBenedictis, John Pickle

#### 1. Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015-2022)

- a. The Committee welcomed Horsley Witten consultants to the meeting, the firm hired to update the OSRP. OSC members and Krista and Lena introduced themselves and reviewed the scope of work for the OSRP update.
- b. Krista asked the Committee general feedback questions to better understand gaps of the current plan and improvements for the plan update.
- c. The Committee agreed that the plan update should include pictures, maps, and graphics. The current plan is text heavy. The Committee also agreed that landscape orientation works better for displaying maps.
- d. Emily Nink stated that it was helpful that the Town website linked to the different sections of the report, so readers did not have to go through the full report to find a specific section.
- e. Wendy and others noted that the current action plan table (chapter 9) was cumbersome and difficult to adapt for project tracking, and that the table/matrix should be reformatted in the update. Zach stated that the updated action table should be more actionable, with measurable goals. Krista recommended that the Committee revisit the plan's action table during its first meeting every year going forward and develop ways to follow up with responsible parties.
- f. Ann and Phil stated that developing actions for the OSRP was challenging because the Committee is not a land owner, and it is difficult to get all town departments and committees to agree on priority open space and recreation projects.
- g. Zach recommended that property maintenance be included in the updated actions. The plan should recommend better branding of open space and recreation lands through more education and signage. Zach also stated that the structure of town departments should be outlined in the report, because open space and recreation projects and maintenance are overseen by several different departments and committees.
- h. Wendy stated that the action table should be user friendly and interactive, and coordinated with the Master Plan.
- i. Elisabeth stated that the plan update should analyze historic trends, since the town has been tracking open space and recreation long enough to have information collected regarding changing values and needs over time (e.g. through town surveys).

- j. Wendy stated that the densification of town should be a larger topic of the plan update. Ann agreed that there are conflicting land use priorities in town, including passive open space and programmable open space.
  - k. Emily Nink recommended that the public engagement process include participatory mapping. Krista stated that she would share a variety of public engagement strategies Horsley Witten has implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the Committee will develop a public engagement plan at its next meeting with Horsley Witten (likely the Committee's March 25 meeting).
  - l. The Committee agreed to draft an update to the action table, develop a list of relevant plans/reports for the update to reference, and review a preliminary list of town department and committee stakeholders at its February 25 meeting.
2. Review/approve Minutes of December 10, 2020
    - a. Minutes of the December 10 meeting were reviewed and approved by all members present.
  3. Updates: CPA/CDBG projects
    - a. The Committee reviewed the open space and recreation projects being submitted as final CPA applications for FY2022 grant awarding. These projects include: renovating the Spy Pond North Beach Ramp with porous pavement material, renovating Spy Pond Park Playground, developing a Town-wide Public Land Management Plan, renovating Hurd Field, and replacing the Robbins Farm Park slides.
  4. Other News and Reports
    - a. Relocation planning for the VA memorial at Broadway Plaza is on hold.
    - b. Mugar/Thorndike Place: Updated materials were submitted to the ZBA on January 22, 2021, including an updated wetlands delineation. The Arlington Land Trust submitted a climate resiliency report on the Thorndike Place proposal to the ZBA. The report was commissioned by ALT and prepared by Weston & Sampson Engineering, Inc.
    - c. Mirak: Nothing has been submitted to the ZBA yet.
    - d. Emily Sullivan asked if the Open Space Committee would submit a letter of support for a MassTrails grant application the Department of Planning and Community Development was submitting to the State. The application proposes to conduct a feasibility analysis of connecting the Mystic River Pathway to the Minuteman Bikeway by enhancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Mystic Valley Parkway and Summer Street, and through Buzzell Field. Emily Sullivan said she would send additional information to the Committee for its review.
    - e. Wendy stated that the OSC Facebook Group was getting more activity, and that she has noticed more activity overall during the pandemic. The OSC discussed using social media during the OSRP update.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 PM.

**2021 Meeting Dates** (usually 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month but note exceptions):  
February 25, March 25, April 29 (due to school vacation), May 27, June 24, July 22,  
August 26, September 23, October 28, November 11, December 9 (due to holidays)

Submitted by  
*Emily Sullivan*