

West Newbury Open Space Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 28, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Please Join In-Person Meeting

Present: Graham Bacheller, David Parrott, John Dodge, Patricia Reeser, Don Bourquard, Jean Lambert, Marlene Switzer and Carol Decker, scribe

Guests: Michelle Greene, Conservation Agent; Wendy Reed, Select Board; Barbara Haack and Pete Majeski, residents

Sawmill Brook Fundraising

Graham B. said that Essex County Greenbelt has completed fundraising for Sawmill Brook and a very successful campaign.

New Trail Construction Protocol

There was a continuing conversation on the newly developed trail protocol. Patricia R. had a number of comments on trail easements. She suggested that an actual deed be submitted so if land is not town-owned, it is known who owns the land. She also suggested that it is made clear in the document why a trail is approved or disapproved. There was a question about funding the trail and Michelle G. said this would not preclude a group from filling out the form or gaining approval for the trail. There were further questions on trail destinations and links to other trails, trail maintenance, and whether a trail is open to passive use, equestrian use or both. A final question came up about who should approve the trail and a variety of options were discussed.

On the new Coffin Street property which is to be called River Woods, a question came up about whether the Town is responsible for building the trail. It seems it is, but this will be looked into. Another question came up about ensuring that trails are completed as planned and what to do if they do not meet the set performance standard. Can the Building Inspector be involved? Possibly there could be a Performance Bond. Adding more money in a Performance Bond could be helpful. Don B. asked who makes sure easements are recorded if the Town is grantee. He also wanted to know if the easement should be included in this document or if an easement was something the Planning Board needed to do

The group thanked Michelle G. for all her work on this document and Michelle G. said she would re-work the document. There would be a meeting on December 13 for the Riding and Driving Club to hear about the document and OSC was hosting it.

Select Board Questionnaire

The Select Board sent out a questionnaire to be filled in by OSC and comments were gathered by Graham B. He said it is 99% finished and he will send out the final document to the group.

MBTA Communities

There was a brief discussion about whether there were questions, thoughts, or concerns about proposed properties to meet the MBTA requirements.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated

David P. said there was going to be a December 6 information session on the new Conservation Commission by-law and it would be a hybrid meeting. He asked that people send their comments on the by-law to Michelle G.

Minutes

Marley S. made a motion to approve the October 18, 2023 minutes. Jean L. seconded. Motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn

Don B. made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Carol D. seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Decker