



Open Space Planning Committee

Minutes

November 14, 2007

Meeting at Town Hall convened at 10:00 a.m. Members present: Anne Anable, Ed Germain, Betsey Harris, Jack Lewis. Absent: Mike Walker, Joe Cavanaugh, Henry James, Bruce Simpson, Sue Yarger.

The minutes of October 25 were approved. [It was noted that on November 14 the committee does not have a quorum and that consequently, all actions and decisions made at the November 14 meeting should be presented for re-approval by a majority at the next meeting.]

The Public Meeting of 11/7/2007. It was agreed that the public meeting had gone well and that all the public attending had agreed enthusiastically with the approach and general goals of the Open Space Planning Committee. Betsey asked if the individual presentations on the 7 priority areas had been effective. The members of the committee present responded that the presentations had been accurate, clear and very effective.

Statement of Purpose, writing an Open Space Plan (OSP). The members present agreed that it was time to write a document that sets forth the purpose, goals and methods that will be the foundation of this committee.

Two plans were considered as models: Hanover's and Swanzey's. All present liked the relative brevity of Swanzey's, but found parts of the Hanover open space plan also useful. There was agreement that the two could be valuable as references when writing Dublin's Open Space Protection plan.

Jack emphasized that the importance of an Open Space Plan document is three-fold: 1) it makes public the goals and procedures of this committee, allowing for transparency and inviting comments and questions so that it accurately reflects the desires of the town and the Master Plan. 2) It gives land owners information and support when considering whether to conserve land. 3) It offers to the Zoning Board of Adjustment a concise understanding of the desires of the town with respect to open space preservation.

The committee agreed to ask Henry James to write the history section of the OSP.

It also agreed that each of the presenters at the November 7th meeting should write a brief description of the priority area they presented. Betsey said she would take Henry's area, since he would be occupied with the history section.

Tasks for OSPC members. Betsey suggested that the committee consider adding an 8th priority area to the list, in-town open space. The committee noted that this would include non-contiguous places within Dublin that might merit the attention of this committee. It agreed that individual areas would definitely include Friendship Field, Yankee Field, the Dublin Lake area, the Old Common, and the triangular area immediately north of Route 101 where currently the Dublin School sign is located.

Anne said she was especially glad that the Dublin Lake area was included, emphasizing that this planning should be for generations, and since no one knows what will happen to the individual properties around Dublin Lake as decades pass, it is important to state the open space goals that should apply. Ed noted that at the public meeting, Wendy White had explained that there was once a public trail around the Lake, and that she suggested this committee note that and consider making the re-establishing of this trail a goal. Anne concurred.

The inclusion of an In-Town area was unanimously approved.

Writing Assignments. The current list of Priority Areas and the writing assignments are as follows:

1. The Monadnock-Sunapee Trail and related unfragmented space in western Dublin: **Sterling Abram**
2. The Mountain Brook watershed to Howe Reservoir: **Jack Lewis**
3. Land contiguous to Monadnock State Park along Eveleth Brook and down through the wetlands to Thorndike Pond: **Ed Germain**
4. A trail and wildlife corridor from Monadnock to the southeast corner of Dublin: **Betsey Harris**
5. Beech Hill north to Harrisville: **Anne Anable**
6. The Stanley Brook corridor from Thorndike Pond to MacDowell Reservoir: **Sue Yarger**
7. The area in southeast Dublin that connects with conservation lands in Peterborough and Jaffrey: **Mike Walker**
8. In-Town Areas. (not assigned).

Each description should be short, naming the aspects of the land that qualify it for inclusion in an OSP. Descriptions should be ready for the next OSPC meeting.

Factual, scientific decision-making. Betsey raised the issue of “science.” How can the committee discern the scientific facts that argue for land protection for a given parcel. For example, how can we know if a specific section of Dublin has prime farmland? Ed and Jack produced the *Natural Resource Inventory* that the Planning Board commissioned from Southwest Regional Planning. Also put on the table was a topological map of Dublin with a soil map overlay. The problem of interpreting such data and applying them to specific parcels raised the possibility that the OSPC might occasionally need to use expert help, a soil scientist, biologist, or archeologist, for instance.

Regarding the preservation of flora and fauna, Betsey noted that the state’s first *Wildlife Action Plan* is available at http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/wildlife_plan.htm. The plan, which was mandated and funded by the federal government through the State Wildlife Grants program, provides New Hampshire decision-makers with important tools for restoring and maintaining critical habitats and populations of the state’s species of conservation and management concern. It is a pro-active effort to define and implement a strategy that will help keep species off of rare species lists, in the process saving

taxpayers millions of dollars. Ed thought that through the state and colleges and universities, some additional help may be available at little to no cost. We must be clear about the facts, Betsey said; conservation areas are everyone's natural resources.

The question of funding came up briefly. Annie and Ed said that the committee's operating expenses, assuming these are not large, can be added to the 2008 budget. Long-range financial planning, however, is critical, complex, and a subject for future meetings.

Should land not within one of the 8 Priority Areas also be allowed to come within the purview of this committee? The question was raised; it was agreed to continue the discussion when the full board convened.

The next meeting was scheduled for December 12, at 10:00 a.m. in Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED

Ed Germain

Secretary