



Open Space Planning Committee

Minutes

December 12, 2007

Meeting at Town Hall convened at 10:00. Members present: Present: Anne Anable, Bill Barker, Joe Cavanaugh, Ed Germain, Betsey Harris, Henry James, Jack Lewis, Bruce Simpson, Sue Yarger. Absent: Mike Walker and Sterling Abram, member at large.

The minutes of November 14, 2007, were approved.

Betsey brought the meeting to order and welcomed Bill Barker to the group. Bill has been ZBA chair for a considerable time, and knows the town well. She sketched for Bill the rationales for the Priority Areas, noting that they were picked for their environmental qualities, natural resources, productive soil, and included water and aquifer protection, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreational uses, historic sites and landscapes, in addition to their function providing connecting trails, buffers, or preserving unfragmented tracts. She stressed that the initial Priority Area Map was created without lot lines and drawn with a broad brush. Not all the land in a Priority Area will need to be conserved, she said, just as some land outside the Areas may need to be conserved.

Betsey then moved, Anne seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to add Dublin Lake to the list of Open Space Priority Areas so that it will read as follows:

5. Dublin Lake watershed and Beech Hill north to Harrisville along the Monadnock Highlands.

Joe focused discussion on the necessity of eventually incorporating the list of Open Space Priority Areas into the Capital Improvements Program [CIP] perhaps as purchase of easements or land, for maintenance or stewardship of protected land, or for a bond to enable land or easement acquisition.

Bruce noted that advice from the OSPC would help the Planning Board site open space as development occurs in Dublin. Current subdivision rules require a subdivider to put at least 50% of the parcel's buildable land into open space, either public or private. Bruce said that it would be very helpful to the Planning Board if the OSPC could recommend land where development *should* occur.

Ed noted that one main purpose of the OSPC is to advise the Planning Board and the Selectmen and ZBA about land use issues. Jack phrased its purpose as "to encourage the conservation of specific land and to guide town boards" in achieving this. Bruce emphasized that "open space is valuable" and Ed reported that national studies support the fact that protected open space saves a town money and helps keep taxes low. Looking at the role of the OSPC in broad terms, Joe said that its role is to "pick up the torch to preserve Dublin for the next generation."

Betsey read the first draft of the purpose statement of the OSPC. Much discussion followed, including suggestions that a history segment be placed in the "Background" section, that "additional tools" be added and the "Land Protection Techniques" be rewritten with emphasis on what tools the town has.

Henry read his draft of the History section. Suggestions included keeping the first paragraph or two, and creating bullets or a brief summary of protective actions over the past centuries.

Sue read her description of the Stanley Brook corridor from Thorndike Pond to MacDowell Reservoir. [The committee suggested she add a sentence on recreational benefits.] She also brought information about *LightHawk*, a volunteer pilot organization that flies environmental missions. It is based in Vermont, and dedicated to providing an aerial platform for education, photo documentation, data acquisition, land acquisition, ecosystem monitoring and more. Ed said he would get in touch with them.

Betsey, noting that it was time for adjourning, asked members to complete their Priority Area descriptions, email them to the group, and be prepared for another meeting on January 9th at 10 am.

Ed raised the issue of acquiring a conservation easement on land adjacent to Mud Pond. The committee recommended that the Selectmen pursue this issue, noting that protecting that surficial aquifer has long been a town priority. Ed sketched several low-cost ways this might be accomplished. The committee advised him to contact Mark Fernald, the lawyer representing the land owner, and ask him to explain the advantages of a conservation easement to the owner.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED

Ed Germain

Secretary