

Lancaster Open Space & Recreation Committee Minutes
Wednesday, November 9, 2016, 4:00 PM
Lancaster Town Hall

In attendance: Noreen Piazza, Tom Christopher, Shirley Griffin, Ted Manning, Cliff McMullan, Tim Castner, Cara Sanford, David Koonce

Minutes

Noreen Piazza circulated the minutes from the 7/27 meeting. No changes or corrections were noted.

Update – Parcel Protection List

A twelfth draft of the parcel protection list was circulated for review. New updates included the start of ranking the parcels for purposes of acquisition consideration should they become available to the Town. The following parcels were ranked using this new system:

- Parcel 13-5, in Cook CA, owned by the Comm. of Mass., ranked at 145
- Parcel 14-11, in Cook CA, owned by the Comm. of Mass., ranked at 155
- Parcel 19-11, in Cook CA, owned by Boucher, ranked at 315
- Parcel 29-22, in Town Forest, owned by Dymment/Dolan, ranked at 205

Any parcel with a ranking over 200 is considered to be of good conservation value. David Koonce and N. Piazza will continue to do parcel ranking and give an update at each OSRC meeting.

It was brought up that we should move forward in transferring certain parcels in the Cook CA that are owned by the Town (BOS) over to the Conservation Commission. Six parcels have been identified (13-6, 13-10, 14-10, 14-14, 14-18, 18-65), and D. Koonce agreed to prioritize which parcels could be placed on the May 2017 town meeting warrant.

It was also noted that Town-owned Parcel 10-13A (21 acres) on Old Union Turnpike has a deed restriction that has expired. The deed restriction needs to be lifted by a vote at Town Meeting. This should be scheduled at the May 2017 town meeting.

D. Koonce reported that the Conservation Commission received a Middlesex Conservation Partnership Land Transaction Grant in the amount of \$3,300 to cover the appraisal for the Dymment/Dolan parcel that the Town Forest is hoping to add to their inventory.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update – 2017

N. Piazza distributed copies of the chapter from the OSRP guidance document on Preparing an Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. She also circulated a first draft of the OSRP outline and schedule. Chapter assignments were discussed, along with the assistance of MRPC with certain chapters as part of a grant from the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. The schedule shows a kick-off in January 2017 and completion in June 2017.

The next OSRC meeting will finalize the outline and schedule, and discuss the required survey and public forum. Drafts of Section 1 (Plan Summary) and Section 2 (Introduction) will also be circulated for review by the membership.

Chapter 61A – Right of First Refusal

Copies of the Chapter 61A release request for Parcel A on Runaway Brook Road were circulated for review. The OSRC is requested to make a recommendation on the right of first refusal for purchase of this parcel. After some discussion, the OSRC decided not to recommend the purchase. The BOS will be notified of this determination.

Town Forest Update

Tim Castner, Chair of the Town Forest Committee, gave an update on the timber harvest at the Town Forest. Work started in early November and is expected to continue through late December.

Freedom's Way Update

T. Castner also reported on a new program from Freedom's Way in 2017 called the ***Thoreau Trail***. In 1842, Henry David Thoreau travelled from his home at Walden Pond in Concord to Mount Wachusett in Princeton, a journey which he recorded in the essay ***A Walk to Wachusett***. Working with communities and partners throughout the region, the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area is working to create a 60-mile recreational trail as an interpretive walking experience in the spirit of Thoreau's essay.

The Thoreau Trail project will be initiated in June of 2017 with support from the National Park Service as a multi-day walking experience, with Lancaster being one of the towns that Thoreau walked through on his way. More information will follow in the coming months.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the OSRC will be held on 1/18. An agenda is forthcoming.