

**Hooksett Open Space / CTAP Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2010
Town Council Chambers**

Call Meeting to Order: 6:00pm

Attendance: Jim Walter member, Kathy Hughes member, Marc Millive member, Richard Bairam member, Frank Kotowski member, Mike Horne member, John Turbyne member, Jo Ann Duffy member, Jim Levesque member Excused, David Hess member Excused,

Overview of Open Space Plan:

Mary Brundage and Linda Madorma SNHPC members – We will be combining two meetings into one. We will be reviewing the current open space plan and after reviewing the all of the maps and new information will be making some possible changes to the current open space plan.

Jo Ann Duffy – The current plan was based off of the maps that show all of this land that should be protected. I think that there are other things that are very important and some things have been completed. But there are other areas that have not been able to be completed because they do not know how to move forward with it.

Marc Milville – This would go through the Planning Board.

Jo Ann Duffy– Once it is accepted it would be something the Planning Board would use going forward.

Kathy Hughes – Do we have the right to tell a private land owner what to do with there land?

Mary Brundage – No and we put that in the plan in italics that you cannot tell them what to do.

Discussion ensued as to what the plan will be used for and who can use it and who would get the best use from it.

This would be just an update to the current plan.

Maps were reviewed and the committee highlighted areas of the town that they thought were important to them and then discuss what they thought.

CTAP Open Space Planning Protocol:

Meeting 1: Overview

- Overview of the Open Space Planning Process/Protocol
- Identify Scenic Views and Quality of life areas.

- Confirm Schedule and timeline

Meeting 2: Identification of high value natural resources within the town

- GIS and GRANIT natural and cultural resource data layers
- Data layers in the CTAP master ARCGIS project
- Delphi process is used to arrive at an agreed set of resource features (represented by data layers): each individual provides a weighting for the entire set of data layers, making sure to distribute exactly 100 points; the group discusses areas in which individuals deviated from the group average, explores the reasons for the differences, and repeats the weighting having considered the views of the rest of the group. The process continues until a consensus emerges. Finally, the committee agrees on 3-5 groups of related resource values, such as habitat, agriculture, unfragmented landscapes, water resources, scenic resources, etc. See Appendix A for a sample outcome.

Meeting 3: Define the Green Infrastructure

Prior to the meeting the GIS Specialist creates maps from the weighting scheme created by the Delphi process applied to the master ARCGIS data layers showing:

- Resource "generalist" areas that are "hot spots" of co-occurring resource values, in the municipality
- Areas of resource "specialists" which are the highest scoring areas within the related resource groups.
- In addition to the previous maps of natural resources; the GIS specialist prepares the "gravity model" map, which gave special weigh to land near existing conservation land. Also created is the 10:10 model map which shows the areas in town that are within a 10 minute walk of 10 or more acres of conservation land.

These maps provide the basis for all subsequent work by locating. In a spatial context, the highest value natural resource areas and therefore those areas of town most in need of protection.

The committee now identifies the area that, if protected from development, should ensure that the services provided by nature to the town's residents will continue indefinitely.

These services include:

- Maintaining the quality of ground and surface water.
- Improving air quality
- Providing sufficient habitat for plant and animal species now in Your community to remain in Your community, even in the face of a significant disturbance such as fire or insect infestation.
- Providing an opportunity for outdoor recreation for all residents at a reasonable distance from their homes.

- Creating a pleasant and scenic environment in which to live.
- Creating interconnected green spaces that allow for trails connecting the various parts of town and allow for the movement of wildlife.

Guidelines for defining the green infrastructure:

- Include areas of exceptionally high resource value for a particular category.
- Include areas where multiple resource values occur in the same place.
- Give added consideration to lands near existing conservation lands.
- Give added considerations to lands that allow each resident reasonable access to open space.
- Avoid areas slated for industrial use or commercial development, unless they contain exceptionally high quality resources.
- Include at least 25% of the town's land area to ensure the sustainability of natural processes.
- Do not include over 50% of the town's land area, to allow for future development.
- Try to combine high value polygons into a single polygon, by including "linking lands" that are feasible to protect.

The Committee members then draw in the green infrastructure, attempting to follow the above guidelines and/or others proposed by the group.

Meeting 4: Review Green Infrastructure

- Prior to the meeting the GIS specialist transfers the acetate polygon into a digital ARCGIS .shp file and provides the total acreage to the group. The group begins by critically reviewing the green infrastructure and confirms that it captures the key resources, is linked together; and is neither too large or small.
- Review and accept Green infrastructure
- Talk about Bonus Points

Meeting 5: Developing Protection Strategies

- Prior to the meeting the GIS specialist will make any corrections to the green infrastructure that was reviewed in meeting 3.
- The specialist also overlays the tax parcels onto the green infrastructure, and computes the total resource value of each tax parcel falling within the green infrastructure.
- The natural resource score was normalized by resource acreage.
- The bonus points decided on in meeting four are then added to the normalized natural resource score.
- A spreadsheet is created that is ordered by total natural resource score. The group then uses the spreadsheets to examine the top scoring parcels and to develop a protection strategy. The broad protection categories are:
 - o Ownership interest (fee or CE) by a conservation entity
 - o Regulatory protections, e.g. wetlands, steep slopes, aquifers, etc.
 - o Management agreement, e.g. powerline corridor, rod and gun club, etc.

- Voluntary agreements, e.g. homeowner back lots pledge to follow BMPs

The group works down through the most valuable parcels until it reaches a point where further work does not justify the added effort. The group may decide to schedule a "Meeting 5A" in order to complete this labor intensive part of the plan.

Meeting 6: Financial Planning and Presenting the Plan

For Open Space funding it is recommended that municipalities take an adaptive approach to financial planning. The recommendations of this plan will represent a "best guess" as to what the municipality needs to do in the short term to execute the Open Space Plan. Since our ability to predict costs beyond the near term is very limited, it is recommended that the open space financial plan be reviewed on an *annual* basis.

It is recommended that the town consider annual funding levels that voters have supported in the past and that the town commits to annual reviews of this level of funding. This will ensure the risk of not completing the planned open space acquisitions does not become too high.

Three levels of annual funding to consider:

- The first is based on the average over the past five years.
- The second is based on the highest funding level of the past five years
- The third is based on the lowest funding level in the past five years.

Years to completion will be based on:

- if the town acquires parcels roughly at their current equalized valuation
- The Land use change tax (LUCT)

One issue with these assumptions is that it does not consider that costs are likely to rise over time. However, it gives a starting point on how much funding is potentially needed to implement the Open Space Plan if all the parcels were to be purchased. A sample funding summary can be found in Appendix B.

Discussion also includes assumptions regarding:

- What percentage of the required funding can be supplied by grants and/or bargain sales?
- How many parcels can be conserved by means other than the town, e.g. NGO or agency?

Meeting 7: Finalizing the Plan/ Adoption scheduling

The CTAP support staff drafts the report, and the group meets to discuss and approve it or make revisions as required.

Schedule adoption

Delphi Process: Consensus building process. It is a way to take different information and meet in the middle with all of the information that is provided.

Appendix A, Sample Delphi Process Outcome

ROUND 3 TALLY SHEET			
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Enter # of Participants:	7		
Soil Conditions			
Important Forest Soil Group I & II	3.6	3.4	3.1
Local Agricultural Soils	2.7	4.1	5.7
Prime Agricultural Soils	6.4	7.1	7.6
State Agricultural Soils	4.1	4.5	4.3
<i>Soil Condition Total Score</i>	16.9	19.2	20.7
Open Space Continuity			
Unfragmented Areas > 50 acres	2.7	2.5	2.9
Unfragmented Areas > 100 acres	5.7	10.0	7.2
Unfragmented Areas > 500 acres	13.6	8.6	8.3
NH WAP Highest Ranked Habitats	16.0	12.4	16.0
<i>Open Space Continuity Total Score</i>	38.0	33.5	34.4
Water Quality			
Aquifer Transmissivity 0 - 2,000 ft ³ /day	5.4	4.6	2.9
Aquifer Transmissivity > 2,000 ft ³ /day	8.9	9.0	7.9
Named wetlands and perennial streams & 250' Resource Area	9.3	13.1	11.6
Unnamed wetlands and intermittent streams & 100' Resource Area	6.4	4.6	8.4
<i>Water Quality Total Score</i>	30.0	31.3	30.7
Views / Quality of Life			
Scenic Views/Ridgelines & Hilltops	6.9	8.3	7.4
Bogs	4.1	4.5	3.2
Lupin Fields	4.2	3.2	3.5
<i>Views / Quality of Life Total Score</i>	15.1	16.0	14.1
Slopes			
	0.0	0.0	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Appendix B, Sample Funding Summary

Year	Conservation Funding (from LUCT)
2004	\$67,552
2005	\$54,079
2006	\$11,083
2007	\$106,162
2008	\$21,770

Total	\$260,646
Average	\$52,129

	average	high	low
Annual LUCT Income (70%)	\$52,129	\$106,162	\$11,083
Years Until Completion	125	61	587

Scheduling of Next meetings:

The meeting schedule was handed out and the next meeting will be held on April 13, 2010 at 6:00pm in Room 204.