

**TOWN OF JAFFREY  
Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 21, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Doane, Garretson

**Absent:**

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Minutes from the April 7 meeting were approved without changes.

Appropriate committee size and names of potential contacts for an expanded committee to develop the open space plan and recommendations to Select Board were discussed. Possible group size of 9-10 people was suggested. Goal is to have draft plan completed at end of summer.

**AESTHETICS, RURAL CHARACTER FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Attendees included artist, historical preservation advocate, landowners. Discussion of examples from other communities around the country where the original character of the town has been lost to urbanization, natural beauty of the land diminished.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

“My interest is not so much in the natural environment, but in the visual and historical environment. For me, the acre of land in Centennial Park (at Main St. and Bryant Road) is more valuable than 200 acres out behind the mountain that nobody can see. ... More people drive cars than walk around in the woods any more. If you want to retain ‘rural character’, one acre as seen through the windshield of the car is more important than many acres that you never see. ... If you see something 100 times passing by in the car, that’s more important than seeing something one time hiking through the woods.”

“You don’t want to see a double-wide trailer in front an important view, I want to see something attractive.”

“Preserving views are really important to the appeal of a town. My home town was the most beautiful place in the world, but has been absolutely ruined by not taking into account the special places. They built houses there and they have their views, but since it’s not open to the public it’s not nice for the overall town appeal.”

“Jaffrey has this unique look, and that’s what the curb appeal is. It makes it a beautiful place where people are proud to live.”

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2010**

“So much of it is perspective. If you live in a house, you might have a much better view of the mountain if you cut the roadside trees, but a lot of the other residents on the road don’t want the trees cut because they think it adds to the rural character.”

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

Possibly retain or create pullovers for access to roadside vistas.

Talking to Historic District Commission might be useful to get their perspective on issues around town, even though their direct jurisdiction is only Jaffrey Center. HDC created a comprehensive inventory of all agricultural properties and structure in town, which is available at the library. An HDC member might be a good representative for any future permanent open space committee.

One of the functions of an open space committee could be education, informing landowners of options available for dealing with their land, or informing developers of innovative approaches to site development.

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

From the standpoint of viewshed and aesthetics, development of many housing units, particularly if executed without design creativity, at Sawyer’s Farm or Grandview would be unfortunate. “That’s not to say that those couldn’t be developed in a creative way that would retain those visual qualities.”

Difficult to figure out finances for protecting land – even if landowner has inclination to preserve land, they still have to figure out how to pay taxes.

“The reality is that they may not have the money – the money may have been played out through the generations. A lot of people have grown up with the notion that owning land is a good investment, and at some point in time, due to the needs of the family or individuals, they may want to change use and develop it. ... Unless you own it, then you shouldn’t have much to say about it.”

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*

Mountain views from Sawyer Farm, Jaffrey Center, Charlie Royce’s field, Steve Meyers’, Gilson Rd.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY  
Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 21, 2010**

5. *Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

Preserving views is not necessarily incompatible with housing development – just requires good site planning and recognition of views as an important parameter.

There needs to be a balance between economic development/business interests and preservation. Economic development director should be involved in this process as well.

6. *Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

Indiscriminate development.

7. *What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

You've got to make people aware of the value, the overall vision for the town.

There was some discussion of the possible uses of view easements in protecting vistas. The committee was cautioned that this can require detailed language and negotiations, and that it may not be as easy as one might think.

Also some extended discussion of the relative merits of current use tax structures. It was suggested that unless the land is actually being "used" (i.e., agriculture, forestry), then it's just a tax shelter that negatively impacts the overall tax base for the town. This point was extended with the observation that removing land from tax rolls for open space purposes also has negative implications for the tax base.

Discussion of differences between European approaches to aesthetics and site planning and U.S. approaches. Proper attention to site design and sight lines can result in attractive communities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Next meeting will be on May 5.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee