



Town of Sturbridge
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Public Lands Advisory Committee (PLAC)

Meeting Minutes for Thursday July 22, 2010

Member in attendance: Dale Favreau, Dick LaFranchise (V. Chairman), Dave Barnicle (ConCom), Douglas Quigley (Trails Committee)

Members Absent: Tom Creamer (BOS), Randy Ellithorpe (Open Space Committee) and Don Miller (Secretary)

Guest Attending: None

(Please note that these minutes try to follow the agenda set for this meeting and any use of the words “this committee” or “the committee” will refer to the PLAC)

Meeting called to order at 6:45 PM (Quorum)

Based on Roberts Rules, if this committee does not have a quorum it will not conduct any official business.

Dave Barnicle and Dick LaFranchise recorded the minutes.

Minutes¹ from our June 24, 2010 meeting were tabled until the committee’s next meeting.

Old Business:

PLAC Membership list² as presented to Town Administrator Shaun Suhoski was approved by both the TA and this committee and will be sent to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for their endorsement.

Note: the selection of committee member term limits³ as recommended by the TA was tabled until the committee’s next meeting.

PLAC Mission Statement⁴ as presented to Town Administrator Shaun Suhoski was approved by both the TA and this committee and will be sent to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for their endorsement.

Forestry Cutting Plan⁵ It was agreed that Tree Warden Tom Chamberland should have a plan already available for how “cordwood” left for the Town use would be distributed. Reference was made to the recent articles in both the Southbridge News (Monday July 19, 2010) and in the Sturbridge Villager (July 23, 2010) with reference to “energy assistance program through which cordwood could be supplied ...”

Note: Since to purchase of the Leadmine Mt. (OSV) land and the mandated forestry plan, there has always been the planned selling of some cordwood to raise funds that would go back into the land to support the building and maintaining of trails on that property.

Letter to Abutters⁶ on the use of Off Road Motorized Vehicles (ORV) will be sent by the ConCom ASAP. Although the State as adopted a new policy starting next year it is the feeling of both the Trails and PLAC committee’s that this letter will help educate and reinforce what the Town and Mass Wildlife have for conservation restriction within the purchase and sale agreement for Leadmine Mt. (OSV) property.

New Business:

Hein’s Farm Field Cutting program is already underway with a local farmer. The fields on this property have a plan in place for three cuttings per year, weather permitting, at no cost to the Town. It was noted that a cutting late in the season

is key to the successful maintenance of these fields and should the current operator fail to meet that requirement the Town will look for someone else to do the haying operation.

It was also noted that several bird species have returned to the Hein's field and that with the current plan the fields remain uncut long enough to allowing successful nesting and raising of the young birds to help bring back various birds once lost in that area.

Land Donations / Offering to the Town⁷ for the following individuals were reviewed and discussed:

1. Walter Regep – The Spaho Corporation; there are three parcels that were offered to the Town and have been reviewed by the ConCom, with two of the three parcels being considered. Those are the parcels at 5 Regep Lane (0.59 acres) and 8 Regep Lane (13.5 acres).
 - a. The question the PLAC had, is there adequate access (Right of Way) to the 8 Regep Lane parcel?
2. Hope & Eric Schmitt – 3 Stearns Drive 1.0 +/- acres, committee members will travel to this property to review the land and will offer recommendations at the next meeting.
3. The request by the Town to OSV for use of the gated area next the trails parking lot for the Camp Robinson Crusoe (CRC) side of Leadmine Mt.; use of this land between the gate and Hamant Brook culvert (Dam 1) will allow individuals using this area for passive recreation easier access to the trails and help eliminate the use of the “sandbank” road during the wet season. The request is currently in review by Town Council and OSV.

Property Boundary Signs,⁸ The committee will continue to work on getting signage posted on the Leadmine Mt. property and the between Leadmine Mt. at the Camp Robinson Crusoe (CPC) / OSV boundary. This work is planned for late fall / early winter when Tick population is reduced and will be accomplished with the help of the Trails Committee.

Vacant Chairman Seat filled – Dave Barnicle recommended that Dick LaFranchise be moved from Vice Chairman to Acting Chairman until the full committee next meets; Approved by members present. At the committee's next meeting on August 26th, the committee will be asked to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Dave Barnicle asked that the committee start focusing on section 1 of our mission statement – “Inventory and maintain a complete list of public lands owned by the Town of Sturbridge ...” Dick LaFranchise mentioned that he had already asked the long term members, Dale Favreau and Tom Chamberland to gather up what they had, and that he (Dick) has already putting together everything he has, including old agendas, minutes, maps, etc.

Meeting adjourned at: 8:20 PM

List of Documents used at this meeting:

1. Meeting Minutes (draft) from May 27, 2010
2. Copy of Membership list sent to TA.
3. Email from TA with recommended “term limits”.
4. Copy on PLAC Mission Statement sent to TA.
5. The Southbridge News (Monday July 19, 2010) article titled “Forestry plan debated – Concerns Expressed over tree cutting”.
6. Email from member Tom Creamer with the recommended Motorized Vehicle letter being sent to abutters of Leadmine Mt. (OSV) property.
7. Memorandum from TA regarding “open space” land parcels being offered to the Town of Sturbridge, MA.
8. Copies of boundary signs: for land owned by Dept of Fish and Wildlife/Town of Sturbridge and Town of Sturbridge.

Action Items:

- Dave Barnicle will handle the distribution of the Abutters Letter.
- Dick LaFranchise will contact the chairman of the BOS to get on the boards working session August 9th to present and discuss the PLAC Mission Statement. A copy will be sent to the chair via email.
- Dave Barnicle will contact Tom Chamberland concerning the Forestry Cutting Plan to see if there are “provisions for handling “cordwood”.
- Dale Favreau, continue to gather up public lands reference data for storage in the committees Town space.
- Dick LaFranchise contact Town appropriate person for the following:
 - New meeting room location.
 - PLAC Committee USPS mail slot.
 - PLAC Committee materials storage area, i.e. file cabinet, closet, etc.

- Information on getting listed on the Towns website.

August 26th agenda items:

1. Approve meeting minutes from May 27, 2010 and June 24, 2010.
2. Members select term limits (draw date from hat, other means).
3. Appoint PLAC Chairman and Vice Chairman.
4. Results of BOS PLAC Mission Statement review (if this committee meets with them on August 9th).
5. Forestry Plan and cordwood distribution.
6. Review of land at 3 Stearns Drive.
7. OSV Access at gate.
8. Review Action Items.

Respectfully submitted Dick LaFranchise, Acting Chairman PLAC