

September 11, 2012 MEETING MINUTES – OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Location: Swampscott Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Toni Bandrowicz, Marc Barden, Angela Ippolito, Jim Olivetti, Sarah Pruet, and Mary Webster

Members Absent: None

Others: Peter Kane (Town Planner), Danielle Strauss (Recreation Director), Richard Smith (Committee Applicant) and Tania Lillak

APPROVAL OF LAST MONTH'S MEETING MINUTES

The second meeting of the Open Space & Recreation Planning Committee opened at 6:30 pm. There was a motion by Sarah to approve last month's meeting minutes. Seconded by Jim and unanimously approved after a brief discussion of whether identification of Toni as "clerk," and not "secretary," in the text mattered. Committee agreed it did not.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATING TO CREATION OF OPEN SPACE PLAN

Angela noted that the "Open Space & Recreation Planner's Workbook" ("Workbook") suggests setting up a process for developing a meaningful plan for the community and that such a process should be an "inclusive" planning process that incorporates public participation. Some different techniques that communities can use to implement a public process are listed on pp. 12-13 of the Workbook.

Noted also that the format in the 1983 Swampscott Open Space & Recreation Plan ("1983 Plan") generally follows the format of the Workbook and that some of the information in the 1983 Plan can be used as basis for the new plan the Committee is developing, with necessary updating.

The committee then discussed how to divide up the work of drafting the different sections of the open space plan. Angela noted that the Workbook cautions against organizing subcommittees along the same lines as the sections in the final plan as that may not be the best way to proceed; the Workbook makes some other suggestions on how to divide up the work on p. 5.

Marc handed out another suggested way of breaking down the workload for the subcommittees (attached). He noted that the final item on his list ("Vision/Conclusions/Needs/Goals") would be discussed after the information in previous section was gathered together.

Marc also suggested using maps as much as possible as "one picture is worth a thousand words." In forming subcommittees to work on the different sections of the plan, he suggested there be a "map" subcommittee.

Toni asked what relationship Swampscott Community Development Plan (2004) has to the Open Space Plan the Committee is developing. After discussion, Angela noted that the Community Development Plan was never formally adopted but its recommendations can be used to support the findings of this Committee as appropriate. There are also other committees that touch on open space (e.g., current

“Beautification” Committee), and our group can coordinate with these other committees but at this point needs to focus on task at hand which is the development of Open Space Plan. The Open Space Committee should feel free, however, to tap into other committees’ expertise as necessary.

Toni asked whether there had been any follow-up reports on whether the recommendations in the 1983 Plan’s “5 Year Plan” had ever been implemented. Pete said none had been prepared because at that time it was envisioned that there would be another plan after the 5 years expired and that new plan would address what had been done, what still needed to be done, etc. The new Workbook has more requirements regarding follow-up (and reporting?)

Marc noted that if the town adopted a Community Preservation Act (CPA) fund, then it would have more resources to address open space protection.

Marc also raised that if lands are under special taxation programs (Chap. 61?), then the town would have the right of first refusal on the sale of the property. Pete note that this may be difficult to sell because it would devalue the land.

Jim asked about the definition of “open space” in the Workbook. In a discussion about the term, it was noted that the town can’t count developed land (like parking lots) as open space in its inventory but, if the town subsequently acquires the parking lot and then turns it into park space, it would increase the towns’ inventory of open space.

Toni asked if town had ever used the Urban Lands Assessment in Appendix I of the Workplan for highly developed communities. It had not.

Also handed out at the meeting were some questions and notes taken by Toni on the 1983 plan and Workplan.

SUBCOMMITTEE DESIGNATIONS

Angela turned the groups attention to the chart on p. 7 with its suggested timeline for what needs to be done to prepare an open space plan. She suggested that tonight the group should focus on deciding how to form subcommittees so can start to gather information and draft sections of plan. Pete suggested member may want to consider their strengths in deciding which sections they would want to work on.

Marc noted that he has resources to help develop relevant maps that will be needed. Noted that eventually these maps will have to be put into town’s GIS system, which Pete can assist with.

Questioned if there should also be a subcommittee to cover a “regulation” category. After discussion, it was suggested that may need to look first at the “use” of lands to determine what regulations apply.

After discussion, the group decided on the following breakdown of subject matter for the subcommittees which is based on the list on p. 5 of the Workplan. The designated lead person will work

with the assistant members to determine what the subcommittee will produce for the upcoming October meeting.

1. *Regional Context, Community History, Landscape Character & Population Data* – Rich will be lead, Sarah and Angela to assist;
2. *Growth and Development Issues and Environmental Problems* – Mary to lead, Rich to support on growth and Toni to support on environmental problems;
3. *Geology, Soils, Topography and Water Resources* – Toni to lead, with Marc and Jim to assist;
4. *Vegetation, Fisheries & Wildlife, and Scenic Resources* – Toni to lead, with Marc, Jim, Sarah to assist; and
5. *Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interests* – Angela to lead, Mary and Jim to assist.
6. In addition, also added to the list a *Maps* category – Marc has the lead, with Pete assisting.

It was noted that last two items on p. 5 of the Workplan (*Conservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Community Goals/ 5-Year Plan*), need to be addressed after the information in the above listed sections is gathered.

At this point, Tania indicated her willingness to assist where needed. Her email: tania.lillak@gmail.com

The group introduced themselves to Tania, indicating how long they had lived in town and their background.

By next meeting, the subcommittees should focus on their specific areas and, at a minimum, come up with an outline of what they will be accomplishing.

Pete confirmed that the subcommittee members can email each other as they are working on draft materials, and that any product the subcommittee wishes to present at the next meeting for discussion can be provided to the entire committee prior to the meeting by email.

Pete has created a framework for the drafting of the plan as a Google document which he will share with the committee after the meeting. Members will be able to edit the text directly, or provide Pete with the text and he will incorporate it into the master plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The committee closed the meeting by discussing some ways to make the community aware of the group's work and start a public participation process:

1. Angela offered to speak at the upcoming Special Town Meeting.
2. Suggested could also have a blog on the Patch to inform the community about the ongoing work of the committee.

3. Finally, the committee decided to prepare a survey using the sample in Appendix H of the Workplan. Mary offered to edit the one in the appendix so that its specific to Swampscott. She will also check to see what Marblehead included in its survey. The survey can be handed out at the town meeting and Pete also offered to put it on the Swampscott website.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made at 8:30 by Angela. Seconded by Sarah and unanimously agreed.

Minutes submitted by

Toni Bandrowicz, Secretary