

October 16 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, Angela Ippolito, Jim Olivetti, Sarah Pruett, Mary Webster, and Richard Smith

Members Absent: Marc Barden

Others: Peter Kane (Town Planner) and Danielle Strauss (Recreation Director)

1. Approval of September 11, 2012 Meeting Minutes (Item 1. on the Agenda)

The third meeting of the Open Space & Recreation Planning Committee was called to order at 6:40 pm. Toni moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting, seconded by Sarah, and unanimously approved.

2. Public Participation Discussion – Town Meeting Feedback and Update on Survey Next Steps (Item 2. on the Agenda)

Mary reported on the distribution of the open space surveys at the Town Meeting (attached). Seventy-five were handed out. Twelve or so people had written comments on the survey; only 5 or 6 people didn't answer the lengthy Question #17 (asking about use of specific properties). Five people wanted to come to the next meeting and Mary will give their names and contact information to Pete who will copy them on emails for future meetings.

The next step is to put the survey on the Town website. Pete has set up a GoogleDocs survey format, but had to break down Question #17 into smaller segments to make it fit properly. Any handwritten surveys that were, or will be, submitted will be inputted into the electronic survey so that all the survey results are in one place and easy to read. There was discussion about putting a box up at the Town Hall for anyone who wants to drop off written surveys. Surveys are due at the end of the month, Oct. 31st.

Angela mentioned that she talked to three town residents at the Town Meeting who have historical information that may be helpful to the Committee, and who are interested in contributing to the Open Space planning process.

In discussing the list of properties in Question #17 of the survey, Angela distributed her draft inventory of public and private open space properties (attached) (which updated the previous inventory that had been distributed earlier (attached)). While it was agreed that not all the properties listed in the inventory also need to be in the survey, the Committee did agree to add the following specific areas to Question #17: Fisherman's Pier, the Tennis Courts at Philips Park; and the "tot lot" by the Tennis Courts.

Also agreed that need to add to the “public” lands on Angela’s inventory, the access strip at Philips Beach, and to move the boardwalk (which is to the right of that access strip), to the inventory’s “private” lands section. (While maintained by the neighborhood association group, it was observed that this boardwalk is on private land.)

Also discussed was the need to protect space next to schools (like the Hadley School). While the Hadley School is under the ownership of the school board, the open space next to it is not, but is instead town recreational lands. If the Hadley School is closed and reverts back to Town ownership, and then is sold, should ensure that the property next to it remains Town recreational land and isn’t sold along with the school property.

3. Reports and updates from the subcommittees (Item 3. on the Agenda)

Inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest (Item 3.d. on the Agenda)

Angela made a presentation on her work in creating the inventory, noting she needs to do more research on deeding. After getting the inventory together, the next step will be to update the narratives in the 1983 plan for each of the parcels, or, if the land is not included in the earlier plan, to draft a new narrative. Decided this subcommittee would divide up the narratives in the 1983 plan for review to see what updating is necessary. Jim will take the first 18 narratives, Mary the second 18 narratives, and Richard the final 18 narratives in the 1983 plan. Once this is accomplished, can check with other subcommittees to see if their work impacts on the inventory and/or the narratives.

Regional Context, Community History, Landscape Character, and Population Data (Item 3.a. on the Agenda)

Richard discussed his redraft of certain sections of the 1983 plan (attached), which included: Regional Context, History of Community, Population Characteristics and Demographics, with a Family Income breakdown, and Growth and Development Patterns. Observed that the population has been relatively stable over the past 30 years. Noted that need to update the seasonal temperatures and the references to Boston & Maine Railroad, and also to drop reference to Routes 1A and 129 being Federal Aid Urban roads as Pete could find no information confirming this fact.

While Richard said he still needed to write up the infrastructure and long term patterns parts of this section, it was observed that this latter information is what had been assigned to Mary’s group. So Mary’s group (Mary, Angela & Richard) will be developing the infrastructure section (which includes stormwater), and the transportation section (which includes bike trails, buses, etc). Noted that there is a map with proposed and existing bike trails that can be used. Also noted that can draw on the planning board for drafting the section on long term patterns. Sequencing of maps would be a good idea; Sanborn maps were suggested.

“Landscape development” which had been assigned in this section, was moved down to the Environmental Inventory & Analysis section, as was the “environmental problems.” This is consistent with the way the Workbook is set up and avoids overlap of work by the subcommittees.

Growth & Development (Item 3.b on the Agenda)

Next, Mary discussed her groups’ outline on “Growth & Development” (attached) which included detailed steps and list of environmental problems.

Environmental Inventory & Analysis (Item 3.c. on the Agenda)

Toni discussed the draft outline her subcommittee prepared for the “Environmental Inventory & Analysis” section (attached). The subcommittee had divided up the work for this section: Sarah took “Geology, Soils & Topography” and “Landscape Character” (and because it was integrally connected to “Landscape Character,” also “Scenic Resources and Unique Features”); Jim took “Vegetation;” Marc took “Fish & Wildlife;” and Toni took “Water Resources.” The subcommittee planned, after gathering initial information, to meet as a group to discuss the final part of this section, “Environmental Challenges.” Each member of the subcommittee then discussed their section:

Geology, Soils & Topography

Sarah noted that the “Geology, Soils & Topography” section is well done in the 1983 plan, so may only need limited updating. She plans to also check with what is in the open space plans from other towns, in particular Rowley. Pete was going to check to see if there was anyone in town with expertise in this area that she could talk to.

Water Resources

Toni outlined contacts she had made, either by phone or through websites, with CZM, Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH), Mass. DEP Drinking Water Program, and FEMA. She tried but unable to talk to anyone in Town’s Conservation Commission. Suggested that perhaps we should meet with the commission as a full committee, and not piecemeal by subcommittee. It was noted that CZM “Coast Guide,” which lists coastal access points in Swampscott, incorrectly references “resident” sticker requirement (should be “recreational” sticker), and that “Sandy Beach” is also referred to in town as “Cassidy Beach.” Finally, the “small paid parking” referred to at Beach Bluff, is actually in Marblehead, not Swampscott. Finally, it was also noted that the list of access points in the CZM guide may not be complete. Decided we should inform CZM corrections are needed to the Guide. Toni will follow-up with CZM coordinator on that, and also generally on available information from CZM. Danielle also observed that the Town provides the bacteria testing on the BEH website, and that it does not test in the winter.

Vegetation

Jim discussed his outline. He asked if there was a town “tree expert” to talk to. He planned on calling Gene Gardner (at the DPW). It was also suggested that he contact the Beautification Committee, Susan Balleza being a possible contact. Noted also that the “Vegetation” topic ties into the Olmstead Historical section of town. It was mentioned that Swampscott is designated a “Tree City,” and that Jim could contact Gino Cresta, the Director of Public Works, on that topic. “Vegetation” also ties into “green infrastructure” and Toni offered to get information regarding that topic.

Fish & Wildlife

As Marc was not present, deferred discussion of his outline on Fish & Wildlife until next meeting.

Maps (Item 3.e. on the Agenda)

Also deferred discussion of mapping until Marc present.

Important reminder: Pete said it is important to provide the sources of all information in the plan, which can be done through footnotes. This was not adequately done in the previous plan. If we provide him with general information, such as the website, or general name of the source, he can make sure the complete name of the source is included in the final plan. He also said that personal interviews are an acceptable source.

Question was asked on how much land is currently developed in Swampscott. When 1983 plan was done it was 70%. Pete will check.

Commented that the historic, now defunct, Swampscott Foundation, preserved land in the town in the past through private means, and was effective at doing so.

As next steps, the subcommittees will continue working on their respective sections.

Move to adjourn at 9:45 pm by Toni, seconded by Angela, unanimously approved.