

## **April 21, 2013 MEETING MINUTES – OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE**

**Time:** 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

**Location:** Field Trip to Various Open Spaces in Swampscott

**Members Present:** Toni Bandrowicz, Angela Ippolito, Marc Barden, Richard Smith, Jim Olivetti, and Sarah Pruett

**Members Absent:** Mary Webster,

**Others:** Danielle Strauss (Town Recreation Director), and Nancy Hughes.

### **Field Trip to Various Open Spaces in Swampscott**

Members of the Swampscott Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee visited various open spaces in town to identify and assess points of access, including:

1. Foster Pond
2. Windsor Park
3. Jackson Park
4. Ewing Woods
5. Whale's Beach
6. Eiseman's Beach
7. Blythswood
8. Phillips Beach
9. Palmer Pond
10. Preston Beach

On the way to Foster Pond, the Committee passed Dandreo Way, an access point that leads to Upper Jackson.

At Foster Pond, the group stopped along Carson Terrace to observe the dock at pond. It was noted that the abutters are listed as owning the pond in the previous plan but questions were raised as to who owns the pond itself and whether the public has public access to, and the right to use the pond. Questioned also whether, if the pond or its access is owned by abutters, there would be a liability issue for the owners if members of the public used the pond and were injured.

Next stop was Windsor Park where the group observed a basket ball court and "tot" playground, both in need of repair. Questioned whether the neighbors' wood piles, snow machines, log splitter, etc. were on town property. Also observed was a large wooded area behind the park that continued a considerable distance (assumed it extended to Aggregate Industry's quarry property). Who owns this property? Should the park be expanded as had been suggested in the old plan? Should this be a recommendation in the new plan? Also questioned whether the stone foundations behind Windsor Park have any historical significance.

There were a number of youth playing ½ court basketball at the time. The basket hoop had been taken down on one side of the court preventing full court play. It was explained that the hoop taken down because of complaints from neighbors that youth from outside of town were coming in and monopolizing the court. Questioned whether this was the right way of dealing with the problem, that is, preventing use of the basketball court for its intended purpose. Is there a way the town can provide a full basketball court without significant encroachment by users from other communities? Does the town need more basketball courts?

Driving from Windsor Park, it was asked who owns the (posted private) property at the end on Windsor Ave. at Nichols Road?

The next stop was Upper Jackson, where the group visited the old girl scout cabin and a small pond. Questions raised included: Who owns this area? Can the girl scout cabin be used for some public purpose? Is the pond a vernal pool?

Next the Committee visited Ewing Woods. One group parked in the Unitarian Universalist Church parking lot, while the other group entered via Forest Hill extension. There is a “paper road between the two, which is now a dirt path with the school on one side, and the woods on the other. The church has an easement on the paper road. The group walked the path that circles through the woods observing the water body on the site. Questioned what the plan will be for Ewing Woods if a school is built? And if the body of water at Ewing Woods is a vernal pool? Noted also that sign was deteriorated.

The group stopped next at Preston Beach, parking on Atlantic Ave and walking through the small park. It was noted that most of the park and beach is located within Swampscott.

The group briefly stopped at Phillips Beach, access off Ocean Ave and next to the Beach Club. The town owns the strip of land from the road to the beach but next to that the beach property is owned privately, except for a strip of land that runs from the Temple through the marsh to the beach at Palmer Road.

Next stop for the Committee was at the end of Palmer road by the Temple to observe the town owned strip of land that runs from the road to the beach. Remnants of a path was observed. Questioned whether the town could build a board walk to the sea at the end of Palmer Ave (partnering perhaps with the Temple)? Will there be issues with access if only parking is along Palmer Ave?

After that, the group viewed the access point to Phillips Beach off Little Point Road. Access is unsigned, and appears to go through a homeowner’s driveway to a narrow path to the beach.

Continuing down to Marion Court College entrance, the group tried to view the Blyswood access point, but it was unclear where it was located. Determined that more

information is needed on where the access is located and what the Town's rights to such access are, and whether there are certain restrictions placed on it.

The group drove next along Puritan Road, past a small public entrance to Eiseman's Beach.

From there, the group drove by the access point at Pollison Park to Whale's Beach, which includes a small grassy area. Questioned whether the public can use Whale's beach or if it is owned by the property owners? Also, is the neighbor of Pollison Park encroaching on the public area?

The group ended the tour at Martin's Way and the Sandy Beach access, also off Puritan. Questioned whether the outlets at Phillips and Sandy beaches just storm drains, or whether there is any contaminated discharges coming from it? It was acknowledged that there is contamination problem at Kings Beach from town storm drains.

The group did not continue to Fisherman's or King's Beach as everyone is familiar with these areas.

Some general comments: There seem to be a number of open spaces that the public is not aware of and/or do not have good access points. Clearly, better signage is needed in several areas.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.