

June 11, 2013 Open Space Community Forum

MEETING MINUTES – OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Swampscott High School Auditorium

Members Present: Toni Bandrowicz, Marc Barden, Angela Ippolito, Sarah Pruett, Richard Smith, and Mary Webster

Members Absent: Jim Olivetti,

Others: Pete Kane (Town Planner) and Danielle Strauss (Town Recreation Director); about 50 residents (see attached sign-in sheet).

Angela and Pete opened the Public Forum and went through a power point presentation (attached) on the Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) Committee -- who it's members are, what it had accomplished to date, and what it's planned next steps are. It was emphasized that the Committee was interested in getting public comment before finalizing the plan. Information was available for those attending the forum, including forms for submitting comments. There is a two week comment period, comments being due on June 25th.

Angela provided a summary of the plan's findings regarding community needs, Toni discussed the plan's findings on resource protection needs, and Marc went over the plan's findings on maintenance needs. Angela then listed the six goals that had been identified by the Committee and the town committees and boards that were identified as responsible parties for their implementation.

During the meeting, the approximate 50 attendees both asked questions about, and provided comments on, the draft plan:

In response to a question of whether Aggregate's property was considered open space, Pete explained that it was not because it is not in its original natural state. A resident was concerned because Aggregate owns 300 grandfathered residential lots.

To clarify which town entities were in charge of which functions respecting open space, it was explained that the DPW is the only source for "maintaining" all public open spaces.

A resident asked how Swampscott's amount of open space compared to other towns. The Committee observed that it varies widely town by town. It was estimated that 20%-25% of the Town is open space.

Because the Town has been ineligible for grants for not having an updated OSRP for the past 30 years, a resident asked how much funding the Town missed out on. Pete responded that while the Town has been ineligible, it would not be possible to figure out how much funding was lost. It was noted that funding is necessary for many of the goals and actions listed in the plan.

In response to a resident's concern that making Harold King Forest more accessible might lead to it being overused and despoiled, the Committee explained that the plan was intended to foster a sense of community pride in, and thus a respect for, the property.

In response to a question regarding the "green corridor" map, Pete explained that it would include designated roads connecting parks and conservations areas. Map 12 shows that the green corridor network uses existing infrastructure -- streets, bike paths, etc. -- and does not require the purchasing of any additional land. Signs would indicate the location of the next "green" space on the corridor.

A resident commented that there is no significant degree of farming in Swampscott, and that this should be important; Pete said that community gardens were in the OSRP.

Another resident voiced a concern that the green corridor as well as the Town pier at Fisherman's Beach needs to be wheelchair accessible.

In response to the question of whether the odor from the Stacey Brook outlet on King's Beach was being addressed, Toni noted that the Town has a consultant addressing storm drain problems in Swampscott that result in bacteria to Stacey Brook outlet, and also that Lynn is taking action to address combined sewer overflows in that area. Once Stacey Brook is cleaned up, there will likely still be an algae problem in the bay, however. It was observed that Mass. DCR manages the algae on the Lynn beaches, but not the Swampscott beaches, as those are owned by the Town, not DCR.

In response to the question of who in the Town will take care of the bacteria program, it was stated that the OSRP Committee sets goals and actions that other committees and boards in Town will manage.

A concern was raised that the plan refers to CPA as a funding option when it was previously voted down at Town meeting. Angela observed that the plan just lists options, and that CPA is just one of the funding option suggested by the plan. It was explained that CPA funds can now be used for existing, not just new, spaces.

In response to a resident's question regarding the draft plan not having specific implementation dates, Pete noted that the Committee first wanted to get public input to make sure it had identified all the goals and actions. After that, it would proceed to developing a 5 year action plan. He explained that the goals will be implemented through a 5 year plan, with the respective actions listed by Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

A question was raised regarding the need to fix the playing fields and it was explained that, while the plan states that there has been a proposal to install a multi-use field with artificial turf, the plan itself only concludes that the fields need to be fixed, and does not recommend a particular solution for doing so. The plan acknowledges that the fields are currently overused.

In response to the question of how the Town is planning to maintain and create more field space, PARC grants were mentioned.

The Beautification Committee is listed as a responsible party under some of the plan's goals, and a member of that Committee suggested that it should also be included under other goals as well, as a goal of the Beautification Committee is to make design aspects consistent throughout the town.

A resident was concerned that an existing skating rink had been destroyed when the High School was built and, even though there had been a promise to rebuild it, it had never been rebuilt. It had also been promised that the tennis courts by the Middle School would be turned into a skating rink in the winter, but that also had not happened.

There was also a concern voiced about the Tedesco property, how the country club gets a significant tax break under 61B (75% reduction) but does not really provide public benefit. Pete noted that the plan recommends getting a conservation easement so as to allow the public off season access to the property, and also having a restriction so as to prevent development should the property be sold. The concerned resident suggested that in addition the Town should revisit the issue of whether a private country club should be getting significant tax breaks under 61B.

A resident suggested that when the Committee is prioritizing projects, it should start at the beach, in particular dealing with issues like access, replacing railings and stairs (especially at Fisherman's Beach), etc.

It was asked if there were liability issues if the Town purchases Philips Beach. Pete explained that there are statutory restrictions on the Town's liability for open spaces, and also that the Town has its own liability insurance.

MAPC had solutions for improving sidewalks on Humphrey, narrowing Humphrey Street within the Downtown Visionary Study and that the Planning Board is moving forward on those recommendations.

Another citizen raised the possibility of "railbanking," whereby the railroad rights-of-way is preserved for possible future use, could be used in the Town's efforts at developing a rail to trail corridor.

A resident asked if fundraising was done could the money go toward for funding the OSRP. It was noted that, yes, the Town can accept funding that is earmarked toward that specific committee.

In response to a question as to whether there is currently a grant writer for the Town, it was explained that one was not funded this year, and that the Town needs to find a volunteer to find and write grants. Joe Makarian was asked if he would be able to help out.

At the close of the meeting, Pete informed the attendees that he will post the excel table of the plan's goals and actions to make it easier for people to provide comments; changes should be clearly marked.

There were a couple of questions raised after the meeting ended:

Could the schools get involved to help out, perhaps identify flora, do clean up? Maybe they could get AP credits.

Have religious groups get involved in cleaning up. Could they be included as responsible parties?



TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

OFFICE OF THE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

S. PETER KANE
TOWN PLANNER &
ENERGY EFFICIENCY MANAGER

ELIHU THOMSON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
22 MONUMENT AVENUE, SWAMPSCOTT, MA 01907

SIGN-IN SHEET

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN
COMMUNITY FORUM

JUNE 11, 2013

(Meeting/Event)

(Date)

NAME (Print / Don't sign)	ADDRESS
HELEN KENVEDY	14 MIDDLESEX AVE #2
John DiCariello	53 CARSON TERRACE
Nelson Darling	74 Beach Bluff Ave
MARC McHEGHT	68 Mountwood Rd
Donnie Crowell + Lisa Menta	143 Bull Hill
Alexis Runstadler	35 Mountwood Rd.
NAUM KIPERVASSER	32 HILLSIDE AVE.
Patricia Malphrus	26 Cherry St
MARC MACCINI	15 LAWRENCE TERRACE
Jennifer Hockett	4 Summit View Dr
Steve Madonna	26 Neck Ave #2
Susan Sutor	25 Stankey Rd
Monique Mc Dermott	34 Stankey Rd
JOE IPPOLITO	366 PURITAN RD
Melissa Caplan	50 DANNISON AVE
Shella Gandy	25 WEXINGTON AVE
Jan Jurma	146 Elmwood Rd.
Glenn Kessler	29 Pyriton Ln
Michelle	15 PLYMOUTH
Rick Jakious	49 Rockland
Maura Lau	15 Outlook Rd.
Marci Benson	265 Essex St
Carlo Delo Russo	266 Essex

