

January 30, 2012 Meeting Minutes
Upton Open Space Committee

Nipmuc High, 7.10 PM

Members present:

Tom Dodd
Scott Heim
Rick Holmes
Alan Miano
Mike Penko
Marcella Stasa
Bill Taylor

Attendees:

Minutes approved.

MP presented a letter from the Cutlers & Pieries. They are asking if the Town would be interested in the purchase of their backland in Upton which abuts Watten Brook Conservation Area.

It would be a tough sell at this time for any land acquisition. Perhaps they would consider working it out as a gift.

The asking price seems high; it would probably be appraised for less.

They might consider working with the Metacomet Land Trust (MLT), as a donation to a non-profit it would be a lot cleaner.

MLT could own it and Upton Conservation Commission could hold the Conservation Restriction (CR).

Response to Culer /Pieri letter: Consider working with MLT. It is too soon for Upton to do another land acquisition of open space.

South Street land purchase project should not use open space Community Preservation Act CPA funds. If some of the property is designated as open space we could be involved & it could be managed by the UOSC.

An inventory should be done.

Use of open space CPA funds restricts the land use to passive recreation.

Selectmen want the South Street land purchase to be voted on at the Special town meeting in April; town hall renovation may be put aside.

Bonding for South Street project would be more strategic, more support for it and get a 2/3 vote.

There is a group wanting to partner with other towns to develop the fields.

Will Mendon contribute/

It will need a CR if CPA money is used, money will be needed.

Chemicals on the turf area could be a concern.

We should walk the parcel.

Events:

Shed Hunt in March at Former Stefans Farm (FSF). Keep it in peoples minds as valuable open space.

The solar farm is still on the table at FSF.

Bellingham has one.

SH - They usually allow grass rather than gravel, 10% maximum slope to avoid erosion. Keep an eye on the solar farm issue.

Farm house and 20 acres @ Sweetwilliam Farm are listed for sale.

As the CR is written the 30 acres are not to be sub-divided.

The idea was to keep the farm intact.

Subdivision is at the sole discretion of the grantor.

\$199,000 for lot 1 - 5 acres

\$549,000 for the house and 20 acres

\$299,000 for the store and 1 acre

Good to keep an eye on it.

MP still wants to step down as chairman of the UOSC.

MS and BT will discuss possibility of co-chairing.

RH – a brochure with maps would be good to produce.

BT went through 15 versions of Scenic Road Bylaws (SRB) from other towns and picked out what might work for Upton.

All derive from Mass General Law on SRB - bylaws all expand on that. Designation, permitting & enforcement.

Weston has language which may exempt utilities

Utilities don't like to come before the Planning Board (PB) in Hopkinton.

BT will call Elaine Lazarus to see if there's any advantage to exempting utilities.

Will PB object to the additional work involved with an SRB? Hearings? Enforcement?

Utilities may take more care with trimming if they have to have a hearing. It's better to have more control than less.

There is no clear definition of a "major branch"

Does Hopkinton require mitigation from utilities?

Ask PB what they would prefer. What are they willing to work with?

Trees grow, so there should be updates of resource recording.

Next step is to go to the PB with the draft document for comments –will ask to get on the agenda for February 14th PB meeting.

Penalty could be \$300 per tree & per linear foot of wall.

Enforcement - A ticket could be issued. It is enforceable and it could go against one's drivers license. MP will look into it.

Next UOSC meeting is on Tuesday, February 14th concurrent with PB meeting with independent UOSC meeting before and after PB meeting.

Friends of Upton State Forest is doing an inventory of historic and natural resources in USF. If anyone knows of resources to report forms will be sent out to keep records. SH may know of folks at the Nipmuc Rod and Gun Club who could add info.

Meeting adjourned 8.55 PM