

**Town of West Boylston  
Open Space Advisory Committee  
Animal Medical Center/Conference Center  
29 Prospect Street  
West Boylston, MA 01583**

**Minutes: Thursday, 26 June at 7:00 p.m.**

Advisory Committee Members present: Dr. Robert Tashjian (Chair), Brenda Bowman, Vincent Vignaly, Brian Bjorklund, Ray DeSanti and Jim Edmundson.

Members Absent: Barbara Wyatt.

Call to Order and Opening Comments: The meeting was called to order by Dr. Robert Tashjian at 7:10 p.m., with a 6 member quorum present. Dr. Tashjian announced that Jim Edmundson would be acting secretary for the meeting.

Review and Approval of 15 May 2008 Minutes: The minutes of the 15 May 2008 meeting were approved without change. Mr. Vignaly reminded Jim Edmundson that minutes of the 17 January 2008 meeting were still not completed. Jim agreed and will “git ‘er done”. Dr. Tashjian then suggested that we move to agenda item 7 & 8 before tackling the final review of the open space plan.

Presentations to the Board of Selectmen meeting 16 July 2008 of the Revised Open Space Plan and by the Task Force of the Sentinel Animal Project: Dr. Tashjian initiated discussion with a summary of the white paper or executive summary “*A Regional Center for Biosurveillance*”. He stated that the revised open space plan would be an integral part of the “*Sentinel Animal Project*”. That is, the project is currently in the planning stages and the task force (including the Commissioner of Public Health [Worcester], Chair of the Disaster Medicine Section [Harvard Medical School], Director of Continuing Medical Education [University of Massachusetts Medical School] and Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Health & Human Services [Worcester]) was highly supportive of the open space plan because a major goal of our plan is to protect much of the Malden Brook property in its mostly natural state. Dr. Tashjian announced that the task force would make a brief presentation at the upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting following presentation of our open space plan.

The committee agreed that a presentation of our revised plan to the Board of Selectmen should be brief (about 30 minutes) and highlight that our plan differs strategically from previous plans in that we focus more on the benefits of open space to public health and safety. Specifically, open space means more than just scenic beauty and recreation, but it is critical for maintaining high quality drinking water, clean air and good soils which is crucial to this town, and open space also helps community budgets through their reduced costs of community services. Mr. Vignaly agreed to lead the presentation before the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Vignaly suggested that prior to the committee's meeting with the Board of Selectmen, the open space advisory committee should submit an article to the newspapers Telegram & Gazette and The Banner that announces and summarizes our revised open space plan. The committee agreed that the article should include the committee's community vision, fiscal analysis, DCR's "payment in lieu of taxes", and benefits of open space, and a summary of our major goals and recommendations. Jim Edmundson agreed to draft the article for the committee's review.

Final Review of the Revised Open Space Plan: At this point, Mr. Vignaly updated the committee on the final edits to the plan section by section including figures, tables and minor changes made to the narrative. The committee agreed with the latest revisions. Mr. Vignaly also informed the committee that we will be receiving letters of support for the revised plan from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission as well as the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen. Mr. Vignaly stated that the agency that ultimately approves these plans is the Department of Conservation Services.

Other and New Business: Dr. Tashjian recommended that the open space committee should participate in some way in the West Boylston Bicentennial Parade. He also suggested that the committee could merge efforts with the Sentinel Animal Task Force on this. The committee agreed that it should devote the bulk of the next meeting to discussing the Bicentennial Parade. Ray DeSanti recommended that the committee might be well served by meeting with town's other open space committees in the future.

Adjournment: The committee agreed to meet on 24 July 2008 at the Animal Medical Center. At this point, the West Boylston Open Space Advisory Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:05 p.m.

*Prepared: Jim A. Edmundson 07/23/2008*