

WEST BOYLSTON OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Animal Medical Center, Conference Room
29 Prospect Street
West Boylston, MA 01583

Thursday, March 5, 2009

Members Present: Dr. Tashjian, Barbara Wyatt, Brian Bjorkland, Brenda Bowman, Vin Vignaly, Ray DeSanti

Members Absent: Jim Edmundson

Dr. Tashjian called the meeting to order at 7:05. Vin to be clerk for the meeting.

Vin reviewed the responses to the DCS comments on the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. Reviewed suggested lots of interest to be included in the plan. Suggestions made by Jim and Ray were discussed and additions were made to the plan.

Dr. T reminded members of the Town Wide Planning Committee meeting April 14 to review the Open Space and Recreation Plan to include it in the Master Plan update.

Discussion of the Selectmen's response to DCR's interest in trading the West Boylston rail trail land and River Road in exchange for DCR land on Prospect Street.

Vin works for DCR, so should not be a signator on correspondence, but agreed to create the draft of the letter as part of the meeting minutes to be completed by the other members. The letter was to contain the following information that was discussed:

1. The OSIC has significant concerns with the proposed land transfer between the town and the DCR. These include the public safety concerns regarding the property on Prospect Street and the loss of Town-owned open space.
2. Dr. T and Brenda will compile the historic information of dangerous activities and reports of dead animals and existing botulism test results.
3. A summary of the current knowledge, from the CDC and other referenced sources noting that there is a threat of harm associated with botulism spores in soils. Use of the information that Karen Pare found appears to note that this is a threat, though reliable scientific sources need to be referenced.
4. A quick paragraph noting that there have/have not been any cases of botulism in the area, and the reason may be that the significant contamination is not in areas where housing or activity has occurred to date.
5. Stipulate the necessary testing to be paid for by DCR that should be completed to protect the town's liability before acquisition by the town should be considered. The test protocol should include the specific testing references, qualified laboratories, and the number and locations of the most likely to be contaminated sample locations.
6. Discussion of the negative aspects of the swap: the loss of control of the Rail Trail ("the jewel of West Boylston"), the only off-street location in West Boylston where public dog walking is allowed; the loss of vehicular access to the western sections of River Road (the costs of repair could be reduced if it were again operated as a seasonal roadway as it was in the past); and the potential for alternative DCR land for field usage such as the land on the south side Goodale Street east of Phelps Place and only swapping the River Road section. The town may not need the whole X acres on Prospect Street.

7. Summarize the items that the Selectmen need to consider and respond to the OSIC in single sentences including the testing and alternatives listed above.

Dr. T reported on the status of AVMF Strategic Master Plan noting he has contacted Senators Kerry and Frank and received positive responses. This project is proceeding under the stimulus plan as a shovel-ready project. Vin reminded Dr. T that a Site Plan Review is still needed and may take up to 6 months to complete if documentation is not complete.

Dr. T discussed the future and mission of the Open Space Implementation for 2009. There should be representation from the OSIC on the Agriculture Commission. Vin will also contact property owners who have lands in Chapter 61 and 61A to encourage their participation.

Asian Longhorn Beetle Update – 4 or 5 trees have been confirmed to have the beetle in West Boylston.

Barbara reviewed the SWOT meeting she attended all day Saturday that was sparsely attended. The recommendations will be used in the Master Plan Update.

Vin circulated information regarding MA Dept of Revenue's Town Meeting process to repeal the Farm Excise taxes to reduce burdens on farm businesses. He also circulated a notice from a Sterling farm for stimulus funding to create jobs and local business to raise medicinal herbs and may receive funding up to \$1.5 million. Dr. T will ensure that these items are referred to the Ag Commission once it is established.

Date of next meeting was set for April 16, 2009 at the Animal Medical Center.

Brenda motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:20, seconded by Brian. Unanimous.