

WEST BOYLSTON OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (OSIC)

June 19, 2012

OSIC Attendees: Vin Vignaly–Vice Chair, Diana Engelbart, Barbara Wyatt, Ray DeSanti

Absent: None

Others Present: Leon Gaumond, Town Administrator

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM at the Selectmen's Conference Room at Town Hall.

Review and approval of minutes from May 14, 2012. Motion - Ms. Engelbart, seconded - Ms. Wyatt, unanimous approval.

Mr. Gaumond noted that he has received and accepted resignations from Dr. Tashjian and Steve Woodcock. The Committee wished to note special thanks for the long service which Dr. Tashjian provided to the town and specifically this board. The committee also commended Steve Woodcock for getting involved in town government and being the clerk for his tenure on the committee.

Mr. Gaumond noted that he has received many emails from and seen emails between members of the OSIC over the last few months regarding disputes of capabilities and intentions of the members. He generally tries to maintain a 'hands off' administrative style, but these have continued to the point where he has received inquiries from the public and he wanted to hear discussion among all committee members.

Mr. Gaumond questioned the need for this committee. The response from members of the OSIC included the specific items in the OSIC Mission which are not provided by any other organization in town; the accomplishments as noted in the most recent Annual Reports; and the general need to have a group to represent the public interest in open space protection and creation. Also noted was the fact that the current Open Space and Recreation Plan will expire in 2013 and an update will be required by the State if we hope to receive any grants/funding from 'open space' related programs.

Preliminary priorities of the Committee for the next year followed with discussion of the opportunity to plant trees while the 'free tree' programs are still running in areas where town parks/open spaces abut residential properties. Mr. Gaumond explained a proposal he made to the Selectmen about establishing a tree farm on town property and to increase the forest cover to that which existed before the 2008 Ice Storm and all the Asian Longhorn Beetle tree removal. The committee had never heard of this, but were in general support if Mr. Gaumond wishes to move the idea forward. Ms. Engelbart reviewed the work she has begun relative to the "Food Forest" opportunities to use wooded areas owned by DCR or under conservation restriction to grow fruit and nut trees and other species under permaculture without tilling the soil or adding chemical fertilizers or using chemical pesticides. The committee discussed the overall goal to retain the rail trail and expand to River Road and along Route 140: widening the bridges at Thomas Street and Beaman Street bridges to create multiple loops within the 'rail trail' to create a passive recreational area. The progress Ms. Engelbart has made in preparing for a Farmers Market in town was also reviewed and discussed. There are many management and operational issues that were not originally anticipated, but she is working through the different options, but there seems to be a significant amount of interest in having more options to buy local goods.

Mr. Vignaly will send out the list of Action Items from the current OS&R Plan for discussion at the next meeting to begin discussion of a list of projects and set goals for the 2013 Fiscal Year.

Mr. DeSanti motioned to adjourn at 8:15 PM, seconded by Ms. Engelbart, unanimous approval.