

Hamilton Open Space Subcommittee
Minutes of Meeting of August 11, 2015
Meeting Held at Hamilton Town Hall

Members Present: Nancy Baker, Gretel Clark, Anne Gero, Jacqueline Hodge, Zachery Peters, George Tarr

Ms. Baker opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Introduction of Members

As this was the first meeting of the Subcommittee, each member provided a brief summary of his/her background and any prior involvement with open space issues.

Greenbelt Presentation Re: Sagamore Hill Project

Chris LaPointe, the Director of Conservation at the Essex County Greenbelt Association ("Greenbelt"), provided an overview of the Sagamore Hill project. The project calls for the acquisition of approximately 340 acres of Chapter 61 open space along Sagamore Road for a total price of \$5.1M – 170 acres in Hamilton that would be acquired in fee, and 170 acres in Essex of which 120 acres would be in fee and 50 acres would be a conservation restriction (to allow for the construction of a single family house in the future). Greenbelt is proposing that Hamilton contribute \$1.75M of the purchase price and has submitted an application to the Hamilton Community Preservation Commission for the same. The remaining funds would come \$1.5M from Greenbelt, \$1.5M from the Massachusetts Landscape Partnership, and \$75K from the Town of Essex. Greenbelt is applying for a \$2M grant from the Massachusetts Landscape Partnership so any amount received above \$1.5M would reduce the amount being requested from Hamilton.

Funding by the Town will be considered at the fall Town Meeting. If all funding for the project were approved and the Landscape Partnership grant were awarded, then the acquisition would occur in January 2016.

The Massachusetts Landscape Partnership grants are only for projects of 500 acres or more. Thus, Greenbelt has been talking to adjoining landowners and is getting commitments from them that they will grant conservation restrictions on their properties so that Greenbelt will have a total project of 500 acres or more. Greenbelt is not able to specifically identify those landowners at this time but Chris said that they are largely located in Essex.

Greenbelt is proposing that Greenbelt acquire the interests from the landowner and that the Towns of Hamilton and Essex hold conservation restrictions over those portions of the project located within their respective boundaries. As the owner of

the property, Greenbelt would be entirely responsible for the operation and maintenance of the property subject to the terms of the conservation restrictions.

LandVest performed an appraisal of the property and valued it at \$5.22M.

Mr. LaPointe reviewed with the Members possible uses and programming for the property as well as steps Greenbelt is taking to make the public aware of the project.

Mr. LaPointe is seeking the support of the Subcommittee for the project.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (the "Plan")

Ms. Gero reported that according to Jim Hankins the Town has engaged a consultant to update the Plan and hold 2 public forums at which individuals can provide comments. He was unclear as to the timing for when a draft will be made available to the public.

Role and Function of Subcommittee

The Members discussed various roles that could be played by the Subcommittee. The Members agreed that the top priority for the Subcommittee is to decide its position on the Sagamore Hill project. Other activities should include:

- reviewing and commenting on the Plan
- reviewing and commenting on the draft Land Acquisition Policy proposed by Marc Johnson, a member of the Board of Selectmen
- advocating with respect to the protection of other significant open space in the Town

Appointments

The Subcommittee discussed the need for a Chairperson and a Coordinator. The Members agreed that the Chairperson would set the agenda and direction for the Subcommittee, and that the Coordinator would coordinate with other committees, boards and organizations in the Town.

Ms. Hodge moved to appoint Ms. Baker as the Chairperson and Ms. Gero as the Coordinator. Mr. Peters seconded the motion. The Subcommittee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Ms. Baker moved to adjourn. Ms Hodge seconded the motion. The Subcommittee voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm