

Hamilton Open Space Subcommittee
Minutes of Meeting of August 25, 2015
Meeting Held at Hamilton Town Hall

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

Ms. Baker opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Gero distributed a draft of the minutes from the meeting held on August 11th and noted that they would be approved at a subsequent meeting. The Members discussed whether approved minutes should be posted on-line. It was suggested that the minutes could be sent to the Conservation Commission for their information, and perhaps they could be posted on their website. It was agreed that Ms. Gero would contact Jim Hankins and ask him his views on these issues.

Role and Function of Subcommittee

The Members continued their discussion of the various roles that could be played by the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee agreed that the Members should keep their ears to the ground for issues that come before the Selectmen and other Town boards that relate to open space, and provide input and comment as warranted.

The Members also acknowledged that the Subcommittee also could play a more proactive role by reaching out to various landowners in the Town who have open space in order to educate them re: ways of protecting that open space. Several Members queried whether the Essex County Greenbelt Association, the Ipswich River Watershed Association and the Hamilton Wenham Open Land Trust currently perform this function. The Members noted that it would be helpful to reach out to these organizations so that we could understand better what they are doing and how we could coordinate our efforts with theirs.

Ms. Baker agreed that she would reach out to these organizations and have these discussions.

Sagamore Hill Project

Ms. Baker began the discussion by noting the importance of the Sagamore Hill project to land conservation efforts since the 340 acres to be protected constitute both "core habitat" and "critical landscape". According to Ms. Baker, only .9M acres in Massachusetts satisfy the criteria for both of these designations. She further noted that in Hamilton only ___% of "resilient land" is protected, while Essex and Ipswich protect __% and ___ % of their "resilient land, respectively. Moreover, for

every \$1 contributed by Hamilton toward the purchase price, the project would generate \$4 in _____.

The Members generally voiced agreement that the project represented the most significant parcel of land to become available in the Town. It would result in the protection of over 500 acres of open space with significant financial contribution from other organizations. Finally, Greenbelt would assume all costs of operation and maintenance of the project.

The Members discussed several items of information that they would like to receive from Greenbelt regarding the project. It was agreed that Ms. Baker would reach out to Chris LaPointe of Greenbelt for such additional information.

Ms. Clark made a motion for the Members to take a vote to support the project. After discussion of the possible wording of the vote, Ms. Hodge seconded the motion. The Members then unanimously approved the following:

The Subcommittee is in favor of the Town proceeding with the acquisition of the Sagamore Hill project as proposed by Greenbelt.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (the "Plan")

Ms. Hodge reviewed with the Subcommittee the existing Plan which has expired. She described the process that was followed by the OSC in drafting the Plan and reviewed the Table of Contents for the Plan. Ms. Hodge noted which sections would need to be updated.

Ms. Baker noted that Susan Brown, the consultant hired by the Town to update the Plan, contacted Ms. Baker and asked if she could come and meet with the Subcommittee at some point in the future.

The Subcommittee noted the importance of the Town conducting a meaningful survey in order to update the Plan.

Land Acquisition Policy (the "Policy")

Ms. Gero reviewed with the Members the July 18, 2015 draft of the Policy, the comments provided to date by the Conservation Commission and the Community Preservation Committee, and her thoughts on the issues presented by the draft policy. She then reviewed the draft comment letter she has prepared.

The Members provided several comments, and asked for time to further review the draft letter given the discussions.

Future Meetings

The Members agreed to meet again at 4pm on September 1st solely for the purpose of finalizing the comment letter on the Policy, and at 6:30 on September 29th for a regular meeting.

Ms. Baker moved to adjourn. Ms. Gero seconded the motion. The Subcommittee voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm