

Hamilton Open Space Committee
Minutes of Meeting of December 8, 2015
Meeting Held at Hamilton-Wenham Library

Committee Members Present: Anne Gero, Gretel Clark, Nancy Baker, George Tarr, Emer McCourt, Jackie Hodge

The meeting of the Town of Hamilton's Open Space Committee ("OSC" or the "Committee") was called to order by Ms. Baker at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes

It was noted that draft minutes had not been prepared for the last meeting held on November 17, 2015. It was agreed that Ms. Baker and Ms. Clark would work together to produce draft minutes for the November 17, 2015 meeting for review by the OSC at its next meeting.

Sagamore Hill

Mr. Peters had agreed to contact Chris LaPointe of the Essex County Greenbelt Association ("ECGA") and then report back to the OSC regarding how the Sagamore Hill Conservation Project ("Sagamore Hill") will be organized and managed. As Mr. Peters was not able to attend today's OSC meeting, he passed his findings on to Ms. Baker who presented them to the OSC. In this regard, Ms. Baker noted the following:

- Approximately 170 acres of the project is in Hamilton and will be owned in fee by the Essex County Greenbelt Association ("ECGA") with a conservation restriction to be held jointly by the Town of Hamilton and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Resources ("DCR")¹.
- The terms and conditions for the use of the project and its management by ECGA will be set forth in the conservation restriction, a management plan and possibly a memorandum of understanding. Each of these agreements would be between ECGA, the Town of Hamilton and DCR.
- ECGA has started to draft the conservation restriction and the management plan. Both of these documents will be reviewed and approved by the Hamilton Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen. They will be signed by the Conservation Commission on behalf of the Town.
- The conservation restriction will contain a general list of permitted and prohibited uses. More specific details such as hours of operation, signage, etc. will be set forth in the management plan.

¹ The remaining 170 acres are located largely in Essex. Of this area, approximately 120 acres will be owned in fee by ECGA with a conservation restriction to be held by the Town of Essex and DCR, and approximately 50 acres will be owned in fee by the current landowner with a conservation restriction to be held by ECGA.

- Consistent with other ECGA managed properties, no motorized vehicles will be permitted on the property except for maintenance vehicles. ECGA will be working with the Essex County Trails Association (“ECTA”) on improving and extending the current trail network.
- The Town would not be charged for events held at the property.
- ECGA may put together a Sagamore Management Committee in the short term to provide input into the management of the property.

Ms. Baker agreed to follow up with Mr. Peters and ask him if he would be interested in serving on such a committee.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (“OSRP” or “Plan”)

Ms. Baker explained that she had received comments on the draft OSRP from Ms. Clark and had incorporated them into Ms. Baker’s comments to produce the draft comment letter. She noted that Mr. Peters has agreed to comment on the water supply sections of the draft Plan but has not yet had a chance to do so. Ms. Clark agreed to reach out to ECTA and get their comments on the draft plan so that we can include them in our letter.

One of the threshold questions regarding the draft Plan is whether the Town will be conducting a new survey. It was agreed that Ms. Gero would attempt to ascertain whether the Town is intending to do such a survey and, if so, during what timeframe.

Ms. Baker asked all of the OSC members to pay special attention to the Action Plan sections of the draft letter and provide her with any applicable comments.

Ms. Clark noted that the Plan should make reference to the recent zoning by-laws that are designed to protect natural resources and provide alternatives to the breaking up of large parcels of land into single family residences. In this regard, she also noted that the OSC should pay attention to the current initiative of the Town to revise the zoning by-laws as they may impact open space. Ms. Baker informed the OSC members that the Hamilton Zoning By-law Steering Committee is holding a public meeting on December 17th from 7:00-8:30 at the Hamilton Library. She encouraged OSC members to attend so that the OSC could follow any changes to the by-laws that would impact open space in the Town. Ms. Kennedy agreed to forward to the OSC members an electronic copy of the proposed revisions to the by-laws.

Mission Statement

Ms. Baker noted that the Mission Statement has not yet been finalized because we are still waiting to receive comments from Virginia Cookson, a member of the

Conservation Commission. Ms. Baker agreed to contact Jim Hankin to ask whether Ms. Cookson has had an opportunity to review and comment on our draft Mission Statement.

Land Acquisition Policy

Ms. Clark and Ms. Gero reported that at the BOS meeting held on December 7, 2015, the BOS reviewed a preliminary list of people to be appointed to the Land Acquisition Committee. Among those names mentioned by the BOS was Ms. Gero. She reported to the OSC that she would be willing to serve on this committee.

Ms. Gero explained that this committee has been charged merely with coming up with a list of the characteristics on which properties should be evaluated. The BOS has estimated that this should take only 2-3 meetings and should be completed in 3 months or less. The committee will not be applying those criteria to specific properties.

Next Meetings

The next Open Space Committee meetings were scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, and 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.