

HAMILTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
April 3, 2019

Members Present: Angela Arvanites, Richard Boroff (Chair), Chris Davis, William Kerr, Merle Olmsted, and George Tarr (ConsCom).  
Others Present: Jim Hankin (ConsCom) and Joe Domelowicz (Town Manager)

This meeting was called to order in the Memorial Room at Town Hall at 9:00 am with a quorum established.

**Presentation to the Open Space Committee on how Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will help in completing the Open Space and Recreation Plan.** Ralph R. Willmer, CAICP, was the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Manager and Principal Planner. Joe Sacchi, Regional Planner from the MAPC Land Use Department would be the Project Manager.

Joe Domelowicz had submitted a proposal to have the Interim 2015 Plan reviewed and a new Plan completed. MAPC agreed to fund the project. Ralph Willmer would oversee the project, having done many over the years and Joe Sacchi would be the day to day contact as he had been managing Open Space Plans currently. Mr. Sacchi was familiar with what needed to be done.

Joe Sacchi said MAPC envisioned the prescribed elements and what data needed to be collected. The most recent accepted Plan was dated, 2009, which Mr. Saachi found on line. Mr. Sacchi said the information such as the history of the community needed to be updated, while items such as geology did not change. Mr. Sacchi would follow practices and make sure the plan was acceptable to the State. Mr. Saachi would put together a Table of Contents, which would be supplemented by the Town and through State data resources as well as MAPC resources. Demographic data would be developed internally, but development patterns, recent changes, or major projects would need to be information collected from the Committee. The Plan would reflect the overall open space conditions within the Town and also put together a list of actions that would fall under the goals and objectives. The list of actions would be formed by public input and agreed upon by the committee. The list of actions would create a roadmap of the next seven years. The Plan would make the Town eligible for park and land grants from the State.

Jim Hankin recalled the last survey had been conducted in the mid 1990's. When the Plan was extended in 2008-09, it was unclear if another survey had been conducted. A reference had been made to 2002. The survey would be conducted prior to the full drafting of the plan but Joe Sacchi would want to meet as a Committee to see what information should be collected. Mr. Sacchi said a survey was not always required. Public input and participation were required but not necessarily a survey. Public meetings were necessary and focus groups were helpful. Guidance would govern how Plans were prepared. Representatives from recreation league surveys were only a part of it. Questionnaires to stakeholders via e-mail or phone interviews

were useful. Joe Sacchi would meet with the Committee four times for updates of the work and to have an opportunity to share what data was needed.

Regarding what criteria was needed for a survey, Joe Sacchi would follow direction but had other surveys to draw information from, which he could bring to the Committee. Asking about awareness and frequency of visitation for all recreational and conservation properties would be important. Finding trends such as repeated calling out for new ball fields would be noted. It was suggested using “Straba”-heat maps on trails to determine frequency of visitation. Survey Monkey would be used to collect and collate the information. Data from other surveys such as housing, would be looked at as they touched on open space needs. Richard Boroff said he had e-mailed Shawn Farrell who had not yet sent the completed survey to him. Joe Sacchi said there were other ways to get information that would be more direct and useful than open space surveys as they typically were from a small sample of the population versus a housing survey that had a higher response rate due to hot topics such as affordable housing.

Committee meetings were discussed. The Committee would provide local knowledge and information during the four meetings. The Committee would compile a list of people who should be reached and a visual survey of the most important parks and open space areas would be done. Those parks and open spaces that were in desperate need of repair or upgrades would need to be in the action plan and should be visited. Parks or open spaces that had been recently renovated would be visited. Richard Boroff suggested that the Council on Aging van could drive them around for the visitation. Sean Timmons would be contacted as he was on the Committee and would be a part of the tour.

Stakeholders would include organizations outside of Hamilton (Essex County Trails Association, Essex County Greenbelt, the Trustees of Reservation, and Harvard Conservation. The Harvard Forest was not protected but did offer trails. The 66 acre Rich/Country Squire property was also unprotected and abutted Chebacco Woods. Myopia was protected but not open to the public. The information was based on MA GIS. It was agreed that the data was not 100% accurate, which is why local knowledge was so important. The Plan was an opportunity to clarify variables and to accurately account for land to the State.

The Committee would be reviewing the document while the MAPC would draft the document. The whole document would be drawing from pre-existing information. The 2015 Committee had a consultant creating tables and other statistical work. Jim Hankin did demographic research and updated the Plan.

George Tarr noted the 2009 Plan on the Town website. Jim Hankin said the State had the 2009 version with no revisions. The 2015 Committee was using the 2009 version as a template. New maps could be created from the old ones. The information was all available from the State website. A new page format with section numbers would be included.

Joe Sacchi referred to “Timing” on page two under Scope of Services. The plan summary and introduction would be produced after the rest of the Plan was put together. The Community Setting section might be an opportunity for the Committee to provide local knowledge in terms of growth and development patterns and land use changes. Data related to zoning and current land use would be used as well as any major zoning changes. Proposed projects or any big ones completed would be catalogued. Ms. Sacchi said a lot might not have changed in Section 4, the environment inventory and analysis, as it related to flora and fauna in town. Any environmental challenges that the Town was aware of would be noted after discussions with the Conservation Commission. Invasive plants, information on stormwater management programs, or forestry, tree preservation or tree warden work would be part of this section. An inventory of particular parcels with their protection and ownership status would be updated based on the primary baseline assessor’s data. Mr. Saachi would pull the assessor’s data.

If something wasn’t clear, such as public access, Joe Sacchi would check with the Committee. After the baseline was set, the Committee would check it for accuracy such as if a new basketball court had been constructed in the park. If the park had been rated in poor condition or without ADA compliance previously, it would be upgraded if the situations had improved. Jim Hankin suggested referring to the Recreation Master Plan, which had been developed and was not as outdated as the Open Space Plan.

After the inventory was complete, the community vision with public input would be used to anchor the goals and objectives and eventually actions. One question to answer was: “What does Hamilton want from its open spaces?” There would be a priority on recreation, open space, or public access. Water protection would be part of the purposes. There would be an analysis of needs developed with public input but particular challenges for the Town would be based on the lack of a particular recreation space or a wide range of things.

The goals and objectives would be based on a survey or public forum wherein attendees would prioritize which goals and objectives were important. The seven-year action plan would grow from the goals and objectives. Actions would be slotted under/within different objectives. Joe Sacchi called the system hierarchical layers.

Public comments would include letters from the administration, regional planning agency, and the Planning Board. Joe Sacchi would provide sample letters. Mr. Sacchi would also pull the maps together at the end of the process. The draft would be produced and the Committee could double check the document for accuracy. Mr. Sacchi mentioned that GIS might refer to a park by one name, while locally it was called another. Small trails might be name-consumed by regional ones. Mr. Sacchi said MAPC landlines focused on looking at the trail system within 101 city and town regions and mapped exiting trails and networks to identify connections. The maps relied on State data, open space parcel ownership and protection status. When Mr. Sacchi creates the actual map for the plan, he would add in existing and proposed trails.

George Tarr and Jim Hankin mentioned the gift agreement at the Patton Homestead and the potential for adding additional acreage of land to be in the conservation restriction. Mr. Hankin noted the restriction was voted by Town Meeting.

Joe Sacchi thought the plan would be finished in October 2019. The first meeting would be a tour of primary open spaces, which would occur after May 22, 2019. Sean Timmons and the committee would create a list of sites to visit. The data would be pulled together with a public forum scheduled thereafter. The Recreation Master Plan noted the field shortages. The public forum would be scheduled for June if input was requested or September if information was to be shared. Input gained would be used in the plan.

The committee would come up with a list at its April 18, 2019 meeting. The list would contain important parks, what work had been completed, and what was needed. Sites would include Chebacco Woods, 133 Essex St., Harvard Woods as the trail went through Patton Park, and Pingree Park because Hamilton played there and Hamilton contributed to the joint Recreation Commission. Richard Boroff said the Recreation Section of Wenham's Open Space Plan would be the same as Hamilton's with some name changes. Mr. Boroff added that there were major problems with the School District's athletic fields. Funding for the turf field was also noted.

**Adjournment**

Motion made to adjourn.

Seconded.

Vote: Unanimous to adjourn at 10:06 am.

Prepared by:

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Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date