

HAMILTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
March 28, 2019

Members Present: Angela Arvanites, Richard Boroff (Chair), Chris Davis, William Kerr, Merle Olmsted, and George Tarr (ConsCom).

This meeting was called to order in the Memorial Room at Town Hall at 9:05 am with a quorum established.

Richard Boroff began the meeting by indicating the importance of staying transparent and credible by conducting business properly.

**Discussion**

Richard Boroff wanted to ensure that information was correct in the changes. Angela Arvanites noted that some change were updates rather than issues. Discussion ensued as to whether Audubon owned land in Hamilton. After checking GIS, it was determined that Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary property stopped before abutting Asbury St. Pine Island was definitely in Topsfield. The information would be double checked to verify as the State GIS had many layers, which made determination difficult. George Tarr suggested using Hamilton's GIS system. Mr. Tarr would investigate if Audubon was in Hamilton.

Angela Arvanites would take Section 3 and Chris Davis would take Section 7 or 8 as well as Section 6. The original questionnaire appeared to have results that were not incorporated into Section 7. Jim Hankin would be consulted. Ms. Arvanites wanted to be able to review the surveys. Mr. Davis said some points in Section 7 referred to an earlier survey. One reference was to the Hamilton Open Space and Master Plan Survey with results received April 10, 2002. Richard Boroff noted that nothing had been changed to the document since 2015 and that notations for "JB" might have been from Jane Baker while "J" might have signified Jim Hankin. Mr. Hankin would be contacted to determine if there was a more recent survey and if results could be given to the Committee.

Richard Boroff suggested bringing the sections factually up to date before obtaining public input then work with the Selectmen to have hearings or forums for community outreach. Mr. Boroff wanted to produce a product first. George Tarr suggested that the survey should be done first and having the document refer to the survey as a basis set. It was agreed that the survey mentioned in the document had to have been conducted before 2015. The State would be asked if surveys that had been conducted five years prior would be acceptable. MAPC would be asked as well.

**Approve minutes for March 14, 2019**

Motion made by Richard Boroff to accept the minutes of March 14, 2019 as written

Seconded by Angela Arvanites.

Merle Olmsted asked to have his name spelled correctly without an “a” in Olmsted.

Vote: Unanimous in favor as amended.

George Tarr noted that the ConsCom did not have the Chairman move or vote the motion.

**Review and revise or accept the changes to Section 6 as suggested in the previous meeting.**

Chris Davis said he made changes to the first sentence of the Draft and took out part of what used to be the second paragraph. Mr. Davis added the Key Findings of the Recreation Master Plan, which he said needed to be incorporated. Mr. Davis made a few edits to the Statement of Goals, which he said was the primary reason why people chose to live in Hamilton, according to the survey. Mr. Davis added to the last sentence: “in this context the overall vision.” Mr. Davis wondered if he should add dates of the forums or meetings held and the survey with its results. Angela Arvanites and Mr. Davis agreed the plan should describe the whole process. Ms. Davis discussed adding new text under A. noting a survey was conducted and also the dates of the two forums. Mr. Davis thought a sentence indicating that the survey was part of the process should be included.

Merle Olmsted thought the Committee should ask the State what flags might pop up as the goal was to create access to State funding. Concern was offered for dating items as it might create a situation wherein the Town would be telling the State that it did this work based on information garnered before 2015. Mr. Olmsted said the wording should just indicate that a survey had been conducted with the date left open. A space would be left in the event a new survey needed to be done, what questions were asked, and who answered them. Chris Davis agreed that having old dates would not be beneficial. Richard Boroff said the item would be reviewed after the rest of the document had been completed. Hearings would be held and a survey could be conducted at that time. Angela Arvanites said public comments made at the forums were contained in the Appendix but there weren’t any other comments other than those of the Committee. Ms. Arvanites said as there was no Appendix, it was impossible to see what was being referenced. It was agreed that a legal notice of time and place was not required. Mr. Davis would do another edit.

George Tarr recalled that the previous Open Space Committee had been bogged down in details of representing Hamilton. Mr. Tarr did not think the survey had been conducted. Angela Arvanites noted the reference to obtaining public comments and two public forums. Chris Davis thought the only survey completed was in 2002 and thought the Committee should work on the survey and conduct it. Mr. Tarr said a recent survey for the Patton Homestead, Inc. was focused on the uses of the property but included questions about protecting open space. Ms. Arvanites recalled a survey in 2016 wherein residents rated bike routes highly. Richard Boroff suggested that the survey was that of Shawn Farrell, who would be contacted to obtain a copy.

The goal was to finish the document expeditiously. Chris Davis suggested asking MAPC how current the survey needed to be to be acceptable. Mr. Davis discovered another note #7 in

Section B that was a review from the survey of 2009 and the text referred to the survey of 2002. Ralph Wilmer was the contact person but MAPC would be sending another person to the Town the following week.

George Tarr commented that he needed to write something that would be not so much of an alternative but a discussion of items missed by revisions of Section B of the Open Space and Recreation Goals. The discussion would be similar to what was there currently. Mr. Tarr thought the Town having a distinctive character was too general and would try to point out Hamilton's unique flavor. Mr. Tarr did not list the educational aspects or reference climate change but might consider it in the process of developing the document. Richard Boroff would edit the document for typos and clarity but not for content. Angela Arvanites appreciated the addition of the equestrian piece as a distinctive feature of the Town.

**Bill Kerr to give an overview of Section 5 with suggested changes, needed additional materials, information, etc. The committee will consider and comment on items discussed.**

Bill Kerr said the goal was to gain access to State funding for recreation projects in the Town of Hamilton. Mr. Kerr gave an overview of Section 5 regarding the text and suggested creating a more concise and lucid document. Mr. Kerr suggested having a conversation with Melissa Cryan, who reviewed the documents for the State, to determine how best to have the State digest and approve the plan. Also having Ms. Cryan aware of the people of Hamilton might be helpful. Mr. Kerr would contact her. Mr. Kerr and George Tarr would work together on GIS and create a compromise between granularity and precision or precision and expediency. Mr. Kerr noted the fluid nature of real estate ownership and its accurate reflection in the GIS database. Richard Boroff noted that Joe Domelowicz and he agreed that the plan did not need to be perfect but needed to be completed. Mr. Kerr concurred.

Bill Kerr recalled that he had connected with the Harvard Forestry School, which owned Harvard Forest (MBTA, Cutler Road, and backing up to Pingree). It was assumed the land had been restricted, but it had not. It was a gift from an alumni to Harvard. Harvard had no intention of selling the parcel, but it should not be noted as unprotected. Mr. Kerr pointed out that the Committee needed to decide what level of precision was needed to understand parcels within the Town.

Bill Kerr noted that he spent time with Chris LaPointe of Essex County Greenbelt, which was a major property owner in Hamilton. While Greenbelt ownership was one level of ownership, Greenbelt also held restrictions on many parcels. Greenbelt was asked to provide a tight catalogue of what was in their control and owned by them in an effort to have accurate data. Mr. Kerr had reviewed MA.gov to determine that approved plans had been created by hired consultants, who knew the nuances of the submittal process. Chris Davis recalled a consultant had been used for the prior plan. Richard Boroff thought MAPC might serve as the consultant as they had set aside funding to help Hamilton. The Committee would know when MAPC visited

the following week. Mr. Kerr also noted that accepted plans had documentation for all protected parcels including Chapter 61 lands.

Richard Boroff suggested looking at Wenham's and Ipswich's plans. Wenham had hired a consultant. The document was on their website. The Ipswich plan was in various places on Ipswich's website but Mr. Boroff would be able to forward it to the Committee. If plans were accepted, they could be located on the MA.gov site. Mr. Kerr would contact Ann Weeks (Wenham) to ask about the consultant.

Richard Boroff would confirm MAPC's visit for the following week. Angela Arvanites would discuss resolving looming issues before presenting her Section at the meeting in two weeks. Ms. Arvanites would send questions to Mr. Boroff. Bill Kerr would speak with Melissa Cryan, other organizations such as the Hamilton Wenham Land Trust, and Ann Weeks before having a discussion either next week or the following week. Chris Davis would work on Section 6 again and send it to Mr. Boroff. Mr. Boroff would speak with Jim Hankin regarding previous surveys.

**Consider and discuss any other material in relation to these topics as needed.**

**Adjournment**

Motion made by Bill Kerr to adjourn.

Seconded by Angela Arvanites.

Vote: Unanimous to adjourn at 10:04 am.

Prepared by:

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Marcie Ricker

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Attest

Date