



Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC)

MEETING OF:
May 24, 2023

MINUTES

Present Members: Jerry Potts, Jessica Reilly, Corinne Schieffer, Lauren Beitelspacher, Sarah Raposa (Town Planner), George Lester; Catherine Scott, Maria De La Fuente (Director of Land Use and Planning)

Absent Members:

Consultant: Wayne Feiden, Plan Sustain, LLC

Location: Zoom

Meeting called to order at 5:03 PM.

Consultant Wayne Feiden was able to incorporate the Select Board's comments into the most recent draft. These are the latest additions:

- Select Board member Gus Murby wished to tone down some language on equity subjects to make the plan sound more neutral and centered, as he believed some sentences may have been overstated.
- The State Hospital environmental mitigation efforts are now mentioned in the latest OSRP draft
- Medfield Outreach recently sent out a survey to households making less than \$100,000 a year. The survey results have now been added to the Plan.
- Mr. Feiden met with Town Administrator, Ms. Trierweiler, to discuss the ADA section of the plan, but will need to follow-up soon.

Ms. Scott said that at the last Conservation Commission hearing, they had some time to discuss the OSRP. The Conservation Commission members discussed what they think of when they think of recreation, which is passive recreation for activities such as walking, birding, and just letting nature exist. ConComm member John Woodhull prepared a statement to incorporate into the plan, which was voted and approved by the Commission.

The plan itself has not yet been approved by the Conservation Commission, as the Chair said she would like to add on more ideas and do additional drafting.

The OSRPC said they are expecting comments by June 1st, and that they have a general feeling as to what the ConComm wants to see, and just need to give them time to write it out. They are not expecting any substantive changes.

Mr. Lester asked where you draw the line between active and passive recreation, if it's the type of activity or the energy associated with it— is running passive recreation, or active?

Ms. Scott said that it is not the activity that is the problem, they just want to stress that for the Conservation Commission, parks, playgrounds, and land are for people to just take in and enjoy. The Commission felt that that had to be explicitly stated in the plan.

Mr. Potts thinks it is a great idea to stress the Commission's definition of recreation, as he wants to make sure everyone is on the same page. This plan isn't meant to change the way any properties are being used.

Ms. Scott mentioned the land inventory project Conservation Commission member John Woodhull is undertaking, and how having a clear inventory of Town owned properties will be very helpful to fairly represent what the Town has, which department maintains each parcel, then see what we can do to meet recreational demand after having taken stock of what's existing.

A conversation ensued between Mr. Potts and Mr. Lester when Mr. Potts asked if there was a hiker's group working with Belforge. Mr. Lester said yes, the hikers wanted to go around DCR land and use the rail trail, but nothing around that area is town-owned. Mr. Potts said that any time Town-owned property is being used or proposed for an event, the Town should be notified. Mr. Lester said he does not think that is the case here, but that he will still let the Town know just in case.

Mr. Potts then asked if anyone else has comments they would like to share, or if they have received any feedback from other Town organizations or interested parties. He was hoping to take a vote tonight to approve the OSRP.

Ms. Beitelspacher just wants to make sure that Parks and Recreation is exempt from how ever Lowell Mason is being presented as, and said that some properties were mistakenly labeled as Parks and Rec land. She wanted to clarify that the rail trail is not maintained by Rec either.

Mr. Feiden said that for purposes of the ADA plan, the ADA plan will say the rail trail is recreational land, but to be maintained by the DPW, not Recreation.

Mr. Potts said the DPW is not taking care of the rail trail, it is an open ended question at this moment. They're hoping the DPW will take on maintenance, though.

Mr. Feiden said that he will then drop the DPW mention of rail trail maintenance in the ADA plan.

Mr. Potts asked about the status of the latest draft, and Mr. Feiden said that the comments they have received have been incorporated, but that there were no real showstoppers.

Ms. Reilly asked if anyone knew what kind of comments the Chair of the Conservation Commission would like to add, and asked if anyone would feel comfortable taking a vote that night without knowing what her concerns are.

Mr. Feiden says that all he has received is the early inventory of town-owned properties, and that there were no issues with those.

Ms. Scott said all she has received is from John Woodhull, the Chair said she still has additions to make but Ms. Scott has yet to receive them.

Mr. Potts said he has had a 15 minute conversation with the Chair of the Commission, and that she seemed to be concerned about typos, but that he did not get the sense that there were any huge changes or significant comments.

Mr. Potts suggested approving the plan tonight with the understanding that future revisions of the plan may be needed, and the plan will still need Select Board approval. The narrative of the plan will not be changed significantly, the language will just be tuned down to be more politically centered and avoid any opposition from either end.

Mr. Lester said that the latest draft shown on the website is the May 9th version.

Mr. Potts said that they have not gotten any written comments yet from the Conservation Commission Chair, and he has asked on four different occasions.. All of the feedback he has is from Select Board member Gus Murby, Parks and Rec, and the ConComm suggested language on passive recreation (edits to Section 5).

Mr. Potts suggested deciding on a hard deadline for comments. Ms. Scott said that would be good, and to have June 1st as the deadline.

Mr. Lester said that he has had one on one conversations with the Conservation Commission Chair, and that he has asked her for her feedback during public hearings as well, but she has only ever expressed her concerns on the individual level.

Mr. Potts feels that, if the OSRP comes up at next week's ConComm meeting, most members would feel comfortable approving the plan. The Select Board thought it was a very comprehensive plan, and said they learned a lot about the Town after reading it.

Mr. Lester would like to clarify that nothing in the plan is more than a proposal, but if it is not in writing, then it will not be on the table. Each committee and organization can take their own initiatives from the plan and run with them.

Mr. Potts said that Select Board member Gus Murby may be approving of the CPA, or at least more so than before. Maybe a group could be put together to discuss CPA afterwards.

Mr. Potts said that there have been no substantive changes to the plan since the last draft. The ADA Committee needs to meet and go through a checklist process to make sure everything is being addressed properly. No members have expressed any concerns as of now.

The Select Board, ADA Committee, and the Conservation Commission will need to approve of this plan after.

Motion to approve the May 9th version of the OSRP, seconded by Ms. Scott. Roll call vote 7-0 in favor of approving the plan.

Mr. Potts said the next steps is for Mr. Feiden to review Select Board member Mr. Petersen's comments, to incorporate them into a new draft, get them to Conservation immediately, and show the Select Board that they have implemented those new comments as well.

Ms. Scott said that she will bring up the OSRP at the next Conservation Commission meeting, and asked Mr. Potts if he could be there to help her present. He agreed.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from 04/13 made by Ms. Raposa, and seconded by Ms. Scott. Roll call vote 7-0 in favor of approving the minutes.

Mr. Feiden says the State is willing to review the current draft before it is fully done, so they will be able to get a headstart on that.

Adjournment: Mr. Potts made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:43 pm, seconded by Ms. Scott. Roll call vote 7-0 in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria De La Fuente