

Town of Westminster

MASSACHUSETTS 01473
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE

Open Space Committee

Phone: (978) 874-7414

Minutes of Meeting – September 5, 2023 –

In attendance: Sue Millman, Amy Tetrault, Isaiah Grigos, Marie Auger, Heather Billings

Tracy Murphy, Town Planner

Absent: Jodi Snyder

Other Attendees: none

Meeting called to order at 7:01pm

1. Approval of minutes:

Motion made by M Auger/A Tetrault to accept the minutes from
July 11 , 2023

Discussion: None

The OSRP Committee voted 4-0-1 to approve the minutes as presented.

Announcements: T Murphy discussed the new Community Services Director position and how that position may be able to help the OSC. T Murphy will invite Audra Kirtland, Community Services Director to the next meeting.

2. Trail Map Project Update:

H Billings will finish the mapping (GPS) the trails within Crocker Pond. The OSC discussed there is a small window from Oct 15 to Dec 1 to get mapping done and the goal is to finish up both Crocker and Hagar Parks. T Murphy will contact MRPC to discuss what steps are next after all of the trails have been mapped and if there is a cost.

3. Scenic Road/Stonewalls Bylaw:

The OSC is happy with the content of the draft bylaw. S Millman informally discussed the idea of a scenic road bylaw with members of the Historic Commission and there was support. She will attend the next meeting of the Historic Commission and the Agricultural Commission to accept input and garner support. T Murphy suggested meeting with the Road Commissioners as well. T Murphy will send out an email letting the committee know when their next meeting is. Including the proposed bylaw on the 2024 Annual Town meeting warrant is the goal to give the OSC ample time to gather public input prior to approaching the Select Board with the proposal.

4. Chapter 61B Properties:

The sale of the Golf Course on Ellis Road was discussed. The property is in Chapter 61B and members of the OSC have many ideas for potential uses. The OSC discussed avenues to inform the Select Board that they are interested in encouraging the town to exercise the right of first refusal. Should the property be taken out of Chapter, Boards and Committees will be notified and asked if there are any ideas/needs for a potential use. There has been much chatter amongst townspeople about the sale of the property and potential town uses. A Tetrault stated that she wanted to make sure the property either stayed in Chapter 61B or the town exercises the right of first refusal with purchasing it. M Auger pointed out that if a buyer keeps it a golf course (61B) there is no requirement to notify the town because it will remain a qualifying recreational use.

A Tetrault started the conversation about other Chapter 61B properties and if there is public access. T Murphy will get clarification from the Assessors about public access and what qualifies a property to be eligible for 61B. Once the OSC gets on firm footing the intent is to ask the property owners what their intention is regarding public access for recreational purposes.

I Grigos discussed the need for permanent protection. He explained that Chapter land is good but is not a method to achieve permanent protection. The OSC sponsored a forum where North County Land Trust (NCLT) came and discussed methods to achieve permanent protection with property owners with larger tracts of land. The OSC would like to host another event and target landowners with 5 acres or more. T Murphy will contact NCLT to discuss this and invite them to the next OSC meeting if appropriate.

5. Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn, I Grigos /M. Auger (5-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday October 3, 2023 at 7pm in room 222.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tracy Murphy
Town Planner

Materials Discussed:

July 11, 2023 minutes
Draft Stone wall bylaw
Draft stonewall/ scenic road application
Information outlining the benefits of Scenic Road bylaw
Terra Firma pamphlet on preserving historic roads and landscapes
Chapter 61B property owner list
Chapter Land SB Policy
Copy of Supreme Court ruling regarding Federal waters