

Town of Westminster

MASSACHUSETTS 01473
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
Open Space Committee
Phone: (978) 874-7414

Minutes of Meeting – November, 2 2021 – Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Attended: Jodi Snyder, Amy Tisdale Tetrault, Isiah Grigos, Marie Auger, special guest Aaron Nelson from the Mount Grace Land Trust, and Town Planner Stephen Wallace. Absent: Heather Billings and Sue Millman.

The meeting started with approval of the meeting minutes for September 21, 2021.

The first order of business was hearing a presentation from Aaron Nelson, Outreach Coordinator for the Mount Grace Land Trust. Aaron gave the Committee an overview of the Land Trust’s recent projects, previous projects in Westminster and provided an overview of the Trust’s outreach and education efforts. Aaron noted the concern for protecting farmland expressed in the Town’s 2021 Open Space Plan and discussed some of the Trust’s recent farmland protection projects. The Town Planner informed Aaron that the Town intended to apply for a Neighborhood Outreach Project and Aaron noted that the Land Trust is one of the entities that will review and approve such projects. Westminster’s Neighborhood Outreach Project will target property owners in the south of Town whose land falls within designated watershed protection areas. The Town will invite the landowners to a Saturday morning workshop to hear from conservation and estate planning professionals about the benefits of preserving their properties for conservation.

From there, the Committee discussed its municipal entity outreach assignments. The Town Planner noted that we received our first letter of support for our open space stabilization fund idea – the letter coming from the Hager Park Commission. Isiah will follow up with the Crocker Pond Commission regarding their letter of support. The Town Planner will meet with the Recreation Commission to secure their letter and Jodi & Sue will meet with Conservation to secure theirs. The Committee agreed that we should round up our support letters by the end of the calendar year. Once we have our letters of support, we will set up meetings with the Advisory Board, Capital Planning Committee and lastly the Select Board.

The Committee then revisited the issue of how much money we should request for the open space stabilization fund. While the Committee agreed on an initial request of \$200,000 per year at our last meeting, Marie said she thought this amount was too low and that we should ask for one million dollars per year. The rest of the Committee thought this figure was too high, and settled on increasing our initial request to \$500,000 per year.

The Committee will meet next on **Monday** night December 6, 2021 at 7:00 PM. The Town Planner will try to round up a special guest for this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.