

Town of Westminster

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

Minutes of Meeting – February, 15 2022 – Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Attended: Isiah Grigos, Marie Auger, Jodi Snyder, Sue Millman and Town Planner Stephen Wallace.

Absent: Heather Billings and Amy Tisdale Tetrault.

The meeting started with approval of the minutes for January 18, 2022.

The first order of business was discussing our idea of establishing an open space/recreation stabilization account. It has come to our attention that the Advisory Board and Capital Planning Committee have been working with the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston to revise the Town’s financial policies. One of the recommendations under consideration is consolidating the Town’s various stabilization accounts into one Capital Stabilization account where all requests for capital expenditures would go through this single stabilization account. If adopted, the Town would not be receptive to our idea of creating a new open space/recreation stabilization account. The Advisory Board will discuss the new financial policies at its meeting on Monday March 7th. The Town Planner will attend to find out what this would mean for future land conservation projects, and how our Committee would go about securing funding under this new policy. Committee members are encouraged to attend, but if you cannot attend and have questions about the new policy, you can send them to the Town Planner and he will ask them on your behalf.

Next up was a discussion about our idea for a volunteer trails maintenance day. The Town Planner spoke with a member of the Hager Park Commission about helping out with the maintenance of trails within the Park. The Commissioner said his Committee would be willing to act as crew managers for a trail maintenance day and they be responsible for doing the work that required power tools, but could supervise between 6 to 10 volunteers helping with other trail maintenance work. The Town Planner said he would talk to the Crocker Pond Committee about making similar arrangements for working on their trails. Marie said that the Mid-State Trail Association handles their own trail maintenance and does not require volunteer assistance. The Committee agreed to hold our trail maintenance day on National Trails Day, which is the first Saturday in June. We also agreed to have people pre-register so that we know how many volunteers to plan for. Town Planner will talk to the owners of the Wachusett Mountain Ski Area about serving as our meeting spot. People would meet at the ski lodge for morning coffee and refreshments, then head out to work on their assigned trails, then reconvene at the ski lodge for lunch.

The Town Planner moved on to discuss our upcoming land protection workshop to be held on Saturday March 12th as part of our Neighborhood Outreach Grant. He also discussed the Town’s new website and the recreation link on the front page.

Committee Member Marie Auger brought in a map of a 90-acre parcel that has frontage on Battles Road and State Road East (Route 2A). The property is owned by the family that owns the Old Mill Restaurant. Marie noted that a portion of the Mid-State Trail is located on this property and she would like to see the Town secure an easement for the trail and a conservation restriction on the ridge behind the houses on Battles Road. This may be a future project for the Committee once we get past our trail maintenance day on June 4th.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.