

Town of Westminster

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

Minutes of Meeting – January, 18 2022 – Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Attended: Amy Tisdale Tetrault, Isiah Grigos, Heather Billings, Jodi Snyder, Sue Millman and Town Planner Stephen Wallace. Special Guest: Trail Planning Consultant Dick O’Brien. Absent: Marie Auger.

The meeting started with approval of the minutes for December 6, 2021.

The first order of business was hearing a presentation from Trails Consultant Dick O’Brien. Dick knowing about our intention of holding a volunteer trail maintenance day, he prepared a PowerPoint presentation on how to organize such a day. This was a reality check for the Committee as organizing such a day is much more involved than we previously thought. We need to have trail experts that have power tool safety certifications, at least one such person per trail. We will also need each volunteer to sign a liability waiver and provide us with their emergency contact information. We will also need a safety plan, knowing where to bring a volunteer should one become injured. This safety plan should be shared with the local Police and Fire departments. We will need a set of tools, which we do not have at present. The first thing we need to do is contact the people that handle the maintenance for the three trails we selected (Crocker Pond, Hager Park and the Mid-State Trail) and find out if they have the necessary power tool safety certifications. We also need to find out if they are willing to volunteer their time for the reconnaissance walks and acting as team leaders during the maintenance day. If they are not willing to volunteer their time, then we may have to pay them. Then we need these trail maintainers to perform a reconnaissance walk on each trail to come up with a work program that five or more volunteers can accomplish in a morning. Then we need to run the work programs by the Conservation Commission to see if we need to obtain an Order of Conditions from them – this could take a few months to complete. We need to provide morning snacks and beverages for the day and then organize an end of the day event somewhere that serves food and drink. In short, we need \$ for this project and will likely need to delay this project until funds are secured. The Town Planner will apply for a Recreation Trails Grant that will cover 80% of the cost of the tools and will approach the Select Board about creating a modest budget for the Open Space Committee. Dick said he would invite our Committee to a trail maintenance refresher course that he will be holding for his Leominster volunteers sometime this spring.

The second agenda item was an update on our municipal entity outreach assignments. Jodi noted that the Conservation Commission is willing to write a letter of support for our open space stabilization fund idea, but has yet to do so. Isaiah and Heather agreed to work together to bring this matter before the Crocker Pond Committee to request a letter of support from them. The Town Planner will meet with the Recreation Commission in January to secure their support letter. 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 Town Planner then gave an update on the Neighborhood Outreach Grant, and plans to update the Town’s website to include an all-encompassing Recreation web page. The new website should go live at the end of this week or next.

The Committee will meet next on Tuesday night February 15, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.