

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2024 in the Slade Building Conference Room

Attending members: Bob Hatch, Stephanie Frend, Mark Kresge, Todd Livdahl, Tim Hawley, Rick Jones. Not present: Susan Worth

Guests: Patricia Lowe, Hubbardston Land Use clerk, Cable clerk, & Special Projects

Call to order – 7:07 p.m.

- The minutes from our October 25, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved as edited.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Rick reported for Susan that we received a \$100 donation from the East Quabbin Land Trust which will go to the Open Space Expense account. The increase in the Hubbardston Preservation Trust account of \$1,755 is presumed to be hay money but Susan has yet to receive confirmation from the the town accountant.
 - **Ryder Property** Acct. 2615 – **\$4,125.32**
 - **Hubbardston Preservation Trust** Acct. 8508 – **\$14,833.40**
 - **Open Space Expense (donations)** acct. 2612 – **\$348.34**

Unfinished (Old) Business:

- **Hubbardston Hikers** – Tim is planning a “Midwinter Walk on the ‘Beech’” on January 20th at Malone Road Conservation Area. He will lead the walk and provide his knowledge of the native Beech tree. The hike will be approximately a mile, rain or shine. He’s also planning a walk in February sometime around Valentines Day – 12 reasons why I love trees. He will be publicizing the hikes in the Barre Gazette, town website, and town social media site.
- **Land Conservation priority team** – Plans are being made to begin meeting twice a month during the next several months.
- **Metal Detecting on town land** – Tim and Nate have done some research with Nate’s counterparts in other towns and learned that very few towns have regulations. DCR does not allow metal detecting on their properties, nor does the National Park Service. What regulations were found only prohibited the practice in natural areas, within 25’ of trees (inside the drip lines), and that anything discovered needed to be reported to the town. One town that did allow it required a \$100 permit. After discussion that raised questions about how permitting would be handled, how any regulations would be enforced and noting that there hasn’t been any issues raised in the past many years, the committee reached a consensus that at this time, no action was needed.
- **Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) status** – Mark led a working session on the goals to be included in the plan during which each goal and objective was examined and discussed to determine whether it should be included and how the goals should be organized. Further discussion on establishing priorities resulted in adding a projected timeline for each objective.
- **ARPA funds** – Mark has continued his work on the two Mass Trails Grant applications. He has had to revise the Williamsville/Rail Trail crossing flashing beacon project because the technology for the proposed motion detection system is not currently available. Instead, the application will be for flashing yellow beacons facing both directions on the road, activated by a button like the crossing lights in the town center.

Mark then discussed his strategy for funding the two projects using the ARPA funds as leverage for the grants and included applying for \$8,000 from CPA funds. He was encouraged by the conversation he's had with the Mass Trails grant committee as they seemed to be interested in the fact that this trail would lead to a vista, an element unlike other area accessible trails. Details of the proposed trail were discussed, including building a viewing deck at Dottie Rock.

He also discussed a fallback approach of using Hubbardston Preservation Trust funds in the event the CPA funds were not approved and asked for the committee's support for this. Rick moved that we ask for Hubbardston Preservation Trust account funds in that event. The motion was seconded by Tim and was unanimously approved by committee vote.

New Business:

- Citizens Academy presentation – Patricia Lowe introduced the committee to this educational program aimed at empowering residents with valuable insights into local governance and community affairs. She expects to enroll approximately 25 residents in the eight-week program with each session highlighting the work of the different town departments and committees, interacting with town officials and fellow residents. She requested that a representative of the Open Space Committee attend the last of these meetings and to prepare a presentation. The sessions will be held during February and March at the Library.
- **Member resignation** – Bob reported that Dave Marsh has submitted his resignation from the committee.

The next meeting is planned for January 25th at the Slade Building Conference Room at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully,

~Rick Jones