

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

November 23, 2020

Meeting held as a Zoom video-conference

Attending: Bob Hatch, Stephanie Frend, Mark Kresge, Todd Livdahl, Susan Worth, Rick Jones

Call to order @ 7:47 pm

- Minutes from October 20th meeting approved unanimously.
- **Treasurer's Report –**
 - **Ryder Property** Acct. 2615 - **\$5,691.32**
 - **Hubbardston Preservation Fund** Acct. 8508 (formerly 2461) - **\$10,598.23** (after \$1,600 donation towards Fieldstone Farm appraisal)
 - **Open Space Expense** acct. 2612 - **\$248.34**
 - Expenditures during the month - \$105 to North County Land Trust for registration of the Malone CR, \$36.59 reimbursement to Mark for Malone sign, \$87.07 reimbursement to Mark for Mt. Jeff Kiosk sign. The last item was requested to be taken from the Ryder Property account, but was mistakenly taken from the Open Space Expense account by the town treasurer.
 - No proceeds from the hay contract have yet been received as of this meeting. Payments, accompanied by the Hay License Payment Form were supposed to be made by August 1st and October 1st per the contract.
- **Fieldstone Farm Update** – The potential donor referred by Ralph Baker that Bob has been communicating with has been actively communicating with her circle of friends about possibly contributing to Fieldstone Farm and the North County Land Trust's Mt. Watatic project. Cynthia Henshaw reports that the closing date has moved out to January 21st due to delays in DCR getting the site assessment and title research completed by December 15th. She is continuing to pursue potential grants and private donations.
- **Mt. Jefferson Conservation area brush clearing project** – Bob has worked with Robert Heipt to schedule his equipment for tomorrow, 11/24 at 7:30 am with the goal of clearing the brush, saplings, and overgrown trees around the foundation, the beech tree, and the edge of the Gates Hill field. Heipt will be bringing someone to work on tree and brush clearing from the ground and Bob will have his tractor there to assist in removing brush cleared by hand. Other committee members will be working with chainsaws and brush cutters to remove the brush and saplings around and within the old foundation.
- **Hay contract performance** – The small field adjacent to the Mt. Jeff trailhead and the field across from it on the east side of Mt. Jefferson Road were not cleared by Laine until late July. He did not clear the remaining fields until the end of August, preventing the potential for a second cutting. Committee members expressed concern for this and discussed expectations for improving performance required by the contract going forward. Bob reported that Laine had reportedly just submitted his payments at town hall this morning.
 - **Actions** – Bob will discuss the contract and performance expectations with Laine

- **Committee Communications protocols** – During the past couple months extemporaneous discussions and e-mail exchanges among committee members outside of normal meetings occurred at which tentative commitments were made regarding committee involvement in the Fieldstone Farm project. This created misunderstandings and concerns that public meeting requirements were not being observed and led to a discussion of what the proper protocol should be for such discussions.

We agreed that going forward we would limit such exchanges to information reporting to the full committee of any discussions or communications, we would refrain from expressing opinions about potential committee involvement or opinions, and no decisions or commitments would be made outside of formal committee meetings. In the event time sensitive committee decisions or actions are required, we agreed that we would schedule a special formal meeting for discussion and to take any required actions or decisions.

- **Ryan McLane survey** – Bob highlighted the request by Ryan to respond to a recent request to provide input for a planned community survey to help shape the decision making process on key town issues.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 29th at 7 pm – most likely in a Zoom forum.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Rick Jones