

Minutes of the Open Space Committee

January 13, 2010

Members Present: Ann Marie Pilch, George Johnson, Cathy Tomasetti, James Keast, John Vosburg, Rachel Kane

Members Absent: Andy Reseska

Guests Present: Paul Saulnier

Meeting started at 7:38 PM

NSTAR Property: (off Fiske Street) - NSTAR has no immediate plans for this property yet. We would still like to get access to the area

Northeastern Property:

Ashland is getting Massachusetts Audubon to get an appraisal to include both the Ashland and the Holliston parcels of the Northeastern property. There hasn't been very much communication from Northeastern regarding how much they want for the properties.

For Open Space purposes, there are a number of access points for hiking (off Stagecoach and Meadowbrook.) The wildlife corridor and hiking trails are of value for the Holliston parcel.

Last week, Ashland Open Space Committee (OSC) met with their Selectmen with over 70 attendees, including Karen Spilka, who voiced no opposition to acquiring the property. The Selectmen seemed in agreement with the idea, however there is a lot of work to be done. This type of proposal may go faster than a developer's proposal.

Ann Marie is keeping in contact with the Ashland OSC and Massachusetts Audubon. Paul Saulnier suggested making contact with the Upper Charles River Conservation also. The William P. Wharton Trust has supported land acquisition in the past - their application deadlines are March 1st and September 15th.

If state funding is sought, we'd need a review of the appraisal. It may be tough to obtain funding for this property as it may not achieve a high enough score.

Property Not Auctioned Off:

There was a 5 acre parcel off of the rail trail that did not sell at the recent land auction that the town had. George Johnson would like to see it transferred to conservation land. He asked Ann Marie Pilch to raise the issue with the Conservation Commission. The property could be transferred by Town Meeting vote. It could be cosponsored by the Conservation Commission and the OSC at Town Meeting.

Adams Street Parking Area:

Ann Marie said that a 3rd party is trying to straighten this out. An unnamed person will try to determine if Planning Board approval is necessary.

Bullard Property:

George and Wayne Beitler, Trustees of the Reservation (TTOR), met with the Bullard Family Trust's board on Sunday. There were some questions regarding the Building Envelope and ways to raise money for expenses to close their budget gap and how it would be affected by a Conservation

Restriction. There is still some discussion on selling the property to raise money. Wayne explained how this may not be a good option - he has seen how this type of action ends up. They are also discussing community gardens and other activities. There may possibly be historical funding available. The Upper Charles River & Trust may also be interested in the property as well.

Web Site: Is still under construction. The Mission Statement is ready for review.

Financial Status:

Open Space Acquisition Fund at 1/6/10 is: \$91,947.00

Open Space Reserve Fund is probably still: \$104,000.00

We still need to recoup the \$14,000 plus amount from the old transaction of the Adam's Street parcels which got transferred into free cash. George will make an appointment with the Town Accountant to try to locate this.

James Keast made a motion to leave regular session for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real property to enter Executive Session without returning to public. George Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously as follows: George Johnson - yes, Ann Marie Pilch - yes, John Vosburg - yes, James Keast -yes, Cathy Tomasetti - yes, Rachel Kane - yes.