Minutes of the Holliston Open Space Committee

November 1, 2023, 7:30pm

Remote Participation

Committee Members Attending: Lixy Carey, Ann Marie Pilch, Carrie Marsh Loscocco, Aaron Schacter, Andrew Johnson

Lixy Carey called the meeting to order at 7:32pm and read the following statement:

Pursuant to the Governor's March 30, 2023 Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c 30A paragraph 20, the Holliston Open Space Committee will be using remote participation for this meeting. The audio of this meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Town's webpage as soon as possible in accordance with keeping the public informed of actions during this meeting. I would ask that all participants remotely attending this meeting please state your name for identification purposes each time you speak throughout the meeting

A roll call attendance was taken:

Carrie Marsh Loscocco present
Ann Marie Pilch   present
Andrew Johnson   present
Aaron Schacter   present
Lixy Carey   present

The minutes from 9/12/23 were tabled as only three members were eligible to vote on them.

Mr. Schacter and Mr. Johnson were welcomed as new members to the Committee. Unfortunately, due to moving out of Holliston, Wilston Johnston has resigned. Ms. Carey will see if Joe Paru is interested in rejoining and will reach out to Town Clerk Liz Greendale to post the vacancy.

Strategic Plan:

A draft of the Town's Strategic Plan has been circulated. Members reviewed Strategic Priorities that had relevance to the Committee (summarized below). Ms. Carey will send the comments to the Town Administrator as requested.

General Comments/questions:
- Groups/individuals responsible for the Objectives and Measures are not specified.
- The level of specificity varies.
- The distinction among the different types of measures – outcome, milestone, and performance – is a bit unclear. Some outcome and performance measures include dates.

Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Objectives:
- No mention of Lake Winthrop
- In addition to conservation restrictions and building codes (not clear what this means) to protect open space, land acquisition should be included.

- The education measures under the third bullet should be broadened to include a wider variety of environmental topics (e.g. native plants, the benefits of open space preservation, invasive species, etc.) and partners ("regional environmental groups" might be more appropriate than only listing Mass Audubon). This also seems to fit better under the final bullet regarding community outreach.
- Invasive species – stronger language than "consider" should be used. A plan needs to be developed to prioritize the biggest threats and most affected areas.

Robust Infrastructure Objectives:
- Add "and other trails" to the 4th bullet.
- Add an Outcome Measure to improve regional trail connections.

Thriving and Engage Community Objectives:
- The fifth bullet on reviewing community spaces only includes indoor spaces. Open space and recreation spaces are not mentioned.
- Outdoor spaces and activities are important to "support the physical, mental, and social well-being of residents" but are missing from the goal statement and the objectives.

Other Business:

Ms. Pilch noted that the list of members needs to be updated on the Town website. Ms. Carey will contact the IT Director.

Ms. Pilch asked that members send their email and cellphone contact info to her and she will compile so that everyone has it.

Mr. Johnson asked about the Brook St. property that recently was on the market. At the September meeting there was a plan to visit it to assess its open space value. That did not happen as the property was sold. A suggestion was made that at our next meeting we discuss sending a letter to the new owners.

Mr. Schachter made motion to adjourn at 8:34pm; Ms. Loscocco seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Loscocco   Aye
Ms. Pilch   Aye
Mr. Johnson   Aye
Mr. Schacter   Aye
Ms. Carey   Aye

Approved January 24, 2024