

November 16, 2005

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Present: Dan Sherr Chairman, Patte Doran, Eileen Hearn, Charles LaMuniere, Susan Payne, Joann Caldara, Chick Treadway

Chairman Dan Sherr called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

MOTION: To accept the minutes of the October 19, 2005 meeting of the Open Space Committee as submitted was made by Chick Treadway, seconded by Patte Doran and passed unanimously.

Mr. Sherr circulated an agenda for tonight's meeting which included the following:

1- Brief review of the OS action items from the NRIR and POCD

2- Brief review of Map

3- Listing of "homework" ideas

4- Discussion and selection of 3-5 OSC projects for 2006

5- Merry Christmas - next meeting Jan 18, 2006

Members briefly discussed what tax relief for open space will do to the cost of taxes and what the long range cost of open space will be? Two points made were that tax revenue generated by farm, forest and open space are greater than the expenditures of the town to service the land and that open space enhances property values.

Pamela Osborne, secretary circulated meeting dates for 2006.

There will be no Open Space Committee meeting in December.

Dan Sherr mentioned that Sarah Gager, a member of the Planning Commission, will be a guest at the January 18, 2006 meeting of the Open Space Committee.

Brief review of the OS action items from the NRIR and POCD: Susan Payne began by noting the new DEP commissioner Gina McCarthy has the following agenda: no child left inside, making/doing the right thing the path of least resistance, landscape stewardship and I have met the enemy and it is I. Ms. Payne started her review with the Open Space Plan's definition of: "Open Space shall consist of land permanently preserved for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife habitat, natural resources conservation, maintenance of community character or as undeveloped land" and the purpose of the Open Space Plan being to contribute to the direction and validity of the Town's land use and development policies and as such could be part of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, which it is. Susan went on to say that last year the Conservation Commission published a "Land Use" brochure and they have begun discussion on the creation of a brochure about "Best Development Practices". The list of resources to be protected is as follows: land used for farming and forestry, water resources, wildlife habitat, unique and significant natural features, connectivity, archaeological and historical and recreational areas. Susan brought forward the map of conceptual future land use. The overall goal is to permanently protect 30% open space by 2015. Susan estimates that by the end of 2005 the town will have close to 21%. The 30% goal is broken down into two goals 1) Open Space/Natural Resource Preservation

at 25% and 2) Community (Rural) Character Goal of 5%. These two objectives are described on page 19 of the Open Space Plan. In the Natural Resource Inventory Report and Recommendation (NRIR) Susan focused on the "Open Space" section on pages 38 & 39. She touched on other areas of the NRIR such as ridgeline protection, managing forest land, habitat diversity etc. Other areas mentioned were the Town's gateways, the old town garage site and working with the Housing Committee.

Chick Treadway brought up the subject of the "flip Tax" he will check on updates for this possible legislation which could help get funding for projects.

Patte Doran brought up her concern about the criteria for parcel evaluation. She felt that giving land a score of 0-50 rather than a point per acre would be better. Quantity should not out weigh quality.

Listing of "homework" ideas 4/Discussion and selection of 3-5 OSC projects for 2006: Dan Sherr stated that this committee needs an action plan for 2006. Joann Caldara felt that a big issue is money. She was also concerned with co-coordinating with other various groups. Patte Doran reminded members of the idea of purchasing a parcel for open space while selling off a portion for high-end building lots. Charles LaMuniere added that in order to raise money you need a specific goal. Members continued their discussions on having community conversations to get feedback from the community, education of the public about tax abatement, the Open Space Committee developing its own goals etc. In conclusion to the discussion it was decided that the five projects for 2006 will be: 1) identify properties 2) raise funds 3) community conversations 4) conversations with real estate agencies 5) tax issues.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is January 18, 2005 at 5:00pm.

Sincerely,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary