

December 15, 2004

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Present: Patti Doran, Phil Markert, Susan Payne, Chick Treadway, Dan Sherr, Diane Williams

Guests: Tom & Betsy Burke

Chairman, Dan Sherr called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

MOTION: to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2004 meeting was made by Susan Payne, seconded by Chick Treadway and passed unanimously.

Dan Sherr welcomed Tom and Betsy Burke and asked if they had thoughts to share with the committee. Mr. and Mrs. Burke were concerned that on the Town survey the Housing Diversity Committee proposed bonding but not the Open Space Committee. Mr. and Mrs. Burke were at the Open Space Forum and the idea of bonding was brought up and well received. Mr. Sherr assured the Burkes that the survey was addressing the funding issue and in no way should they think the Open Space Committee was excluding the consideration of bonding. Mr. Burke went on to state that land may become available and the Town may want to act quickly. He asked if there could be a Town referendum held before hand on the bonding issue, a "prebonding" so the funding is already available. Susan Payne added that it was her belief that the Town had to vote on individual purchases. Discussion continued briefly about the forums, survey and what the towns people want to do and how to accomplish their goals. Mr. Sherr thanked the Burkes for coming and sharing their thoughts.

Dan Sherr circulated the poll results from the November 17, 2004 meeting. Dan touched on a few points: preserving open space is viewed highly, diversified housing is a close second and there appears to be limited support to minimizing tax increases. One concern Dan has is that there were responses from very few people with children in the school system so the results don't represent this population.

Patti Doran, also a member of the Housing Diversity Group, gave members a handout with a scenario which included both the housing and open space pieces; there are pros and cons to combining the two goals. Ms. Doran wanted to be sure that the Open Space Committee was receptive to the idea of combining the two; Mr. Sherr felt that members would have no problem with it. The Housing Diversity Committee has a report due to the Selectmen by March 2005; their goal is 96 affordable units in 8 years. Tentatively ideas such as housing units over businesses in town and tax breaks for accessory apartments have been brought up also. Susan Payne interjected as an example the Potter Farm property which is on the market could address both issues as well as farm preservation. Farming could be continued, affordable housing units, open space, as well as carving off a piece for sale could all be accomplished on the property. Phil Markert agreed it could work, he feels it is feasible to do without a bond. You would need a "manager". If you could identify a farmer to work with, get a trusted architect's input, you could put together a group of "local developers" and consultants then hire a builder. Patti Doran added that's the Selectmen's question to the Housing Group "Who is going to manage the project?" Mr. Markert answered that within the town there might be people willing to do the job. You would have to meet the affordable housing state mandates and perhaps make changes to the Zoning Regulations. Dan Sherr added you need an organized team to drive the initiative when the property becomes available. Dan went on to ask if this will happen on its own or does it need to be organized? Chick Treadway feels that the Selectman needs to meet with the chairmen of the Board of Finance, Open Space, Housing Diversity, Farm Preservation and the Housing Trust. Ms. Doran felt you need to work out the details before going to the Board of Finance. Mr. Sherr feels the community is committed to preserving open space; you have a land trust actively involved and have formed an Open Space Committee from the Conservation Commission. You need a

similar structure for the housing picture, you can share space while maintaining individual goals, use the same process to move forward "endorse each other". Phil Markert will put together information including the financial aspect of combining several of the objectives such as open space and affordable housing. Susan Payne is anxious to see action. Dan Sherr will work with Patti Doran to outline a plan before the January meeting.

MOTION: to accept the Open Space Committee meeting dates for 2005 as submitted was made by Susan Payne, seconded by Chick Treadway and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is January 19, 2005 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary