

NATICK OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 12, 2023 7:00 PM
Zoom meeting – Remote Participation

Minutes

Members Present: Chair, Martin Kessel, Mary Stuart, Terri Evans, David Ordway, Doug Shephard, David Lodding

Guest: Claire Rundelli, Planner/Conservation Agent

Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2022

Minutes not available

Upcoming Events

- Mass. Open Space Conference, webinars, Thursdays in February
- 2023 Mass. Land Conservation Conference, Worcester, March 25

Updates

- *Trails & Forest Stewardship Committee*: Claire reported that Natick DPW removed several downed trees from the Eisenmenger Trail.
- *Community Preservation Act*: Natick voters approved the CPA on November 8th with 63% “yes” votes. Claire reported that she has met with other Town officials to begin to draft a By-law to place on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant.
- *5 Auburn Street RFP*: Martin reported that RFP applications have been received. Select Board discussions have focused on process. Next steps will be to interview applicants.
- *MetroWest Collaborative Trail Forum, Broadmoor, December 12*: About half a dozen Natick representatives attended. Claire reported that face-to-face introductions were helpful. There were useful discussions about wayfinding conformity and the potential for forming trail connections at town borders.
- *MetroWest Climate Equity Project, Zoom, December 12*: The meeting was a wrap-up of work throughout the year. Discussion included the need for access to open spaces that does not require a car. The Rail Trail access to Cochituate State Park was cited as an example. Pedestrian and bike safety on roads was also an issue. Martin said that some concerns were expressed for personal safety and footing on trails.
- *Conservation Commission Beaver Forum, Zoom, December 19*: Claire reported that some residents felt that previous discussions had not focused enough on the downstream effects of beaver activity, citing the unusually low water at Jennings Pond last summer. Claire said that there was a plan to create a decision tree format for dealing with beaver issues. She also discussed the requirements for applying for beaver dam removals.

Planning Board Updates

Cluster bylaw: Terri explained that the intent of the proposed update is to be simpler and less reliant on formulas. The goal is to place a proposed update on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

Annual Town Report

Martin presented a draft Open Space Advisory Committee Annual report. Terri moved to approve the report; seconded by Doug Shephard. The motion was approved unanimously.

In Person Meeting Return and 2023 meeting Schedule.

There was a brief discussion of in person meetings. Would it be possible to find a meeting space larger than the conference room used prior to Covid? Current state law allows virtual meetings only through March 23. The start date for in person meetings will be decided at the next OSAC meeting. The 2023 meeting schedule is as follows, which generally continues the committee's 2nd-Thursday pattern:

January 12	July 6 (1st Thur. due to ConCom)
February 9	August 10
March 9	September 14
April 13	October 12
May 11	November 9
June 8	December 14

Goals for 2023

Martin submitted a Proposal for Goals for 2023, based on last month's discussion. Terri moved to approve the Goals, as stated below; seconded by Mary Stuart. The motion was approved unanimously. 2023 Goals are as follows:

1. Reach out to owners and residents in West Natick condo complexes regarding use of open space for trails (include MetroWest Climate Equity Project contacts)
2. Identify point of contact and decision process for West Natick power lines (include resources on last year's list plus Sherborn)
3. Develop herbicide/pesticide educational materials (still at top of Claire's list; potential support from grant and Climate Equity Project)
4. Complete comprehensive invasive species management plan at Town Forest (well underway, but more to do)
5. Create boardwalk to connect north and south Pickerel Pond trails
6. Create Community-Senior Center Trail
7. Improve at least one trail to make it more accessible

Open space inventory follow-up

Martin briefly reviewed two high priority land areas with unresolved ownership issues:

0 Mill Street – West Hill Park. We have investigated the possibility of a connecting trail on the power line easement, with a spur leading to Newfield Drive.

Three Hopewell Farm land parcels. The Hopewell Farm parcels hold the prospect for connecting the Natick Sudbury Aqueduct trail with the Sherborn portion of the Aqueduct, but there are very challenging hurdles to overcome.

Motion to adjourn by Terri, seconded by David L.

Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Minutes Approved 2/9/2023