

NATICK OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday, March 13, 2023 7:00 PM
Zoom meeting – Remote Participation

Minutes

Members Present: Chair, Martin Kessel, Doug Drenik, Mary Stuart, David Lodding

Guests: Claire Rundelli, Planner/Conservation Agent; Ben Stevens, Trask Development;
Atty. George L. Richards; Chris Yetman

Approval of Minutes – February 9, 2023

Approved 4-0

Updates

- *Trails & Forest Stewardship Committee*: Doug reported that the Committee finalized its 2023 Goals at the last meeting. The list assigns individual committee members to specific tasks. It also provides for three overarching responsibilities: Town Forest Meadow Restoration, Invasive Species Inventory & Management Plan, and Identify & Prepare for Possible Capital Investments. Doug described the TaFS mission as “fixing and improving the existing trail system.”

Doug said that work days will be planned this spring for a major reseeded project at the Town Forest meadow. He is also working to establish a scout project to repair the Eisenmenger Trail boardwalk, adjacent to Woodland Street.

- *5 Auburn Street RFP*: Martin reported that the Select Board began its evaluation of the four applicants last Wednesday and is expected to make a decision the coming Wednesday.
- *Conservation Commission Beaver Policy*: Claire reported that the ConCom has finalized the Decision Tree regarding beaver dams. The aim is to have a mechanism in place that allows for breaching the dams when necessary in order to discourage the beavers, thereby avoiding major breaches and/or trapping.

Planning Board Updates

26-34 Union Street (ALoop) was previously approved, but apparently a new plan has been submitted.

In Person Meeting Return

Claire has reserved the Select Board meeting room for our meeting on April 13th.

Earth Day All Around Natick, April 29-30

OSAC and TaFS will conduct the following events:

- Saturday April 29, 9 am-1 pm: Open Spaces & Trails Info Table on the Common.
- Saturday, 2-3 pm: Introductory Trail Walk, Cochituate Aqueduct & Pickerel Pond, led by Martin.
- Sunday, April 30, 9 am – noon: Trail Work at Hunnewell Town Forest Meadow.
- Sunday, 1-3pm: Nature Walk at Hunnewell Town Forest, led by Claire.

Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 20 *Amend the Town of Natick By-Laws: Create New Committee [Community Preservation Committee] (Town Administrator)*

Claire reported that the goal is to organize staff by summer; the Committee would be official by January 2024.

Motion to endorse Article 20 approved 4-0.

Article 26 *Amend Zoning By-Law: Open Space Cluster Development (Planning Board)*

Ben Stevens, head of Trask Inc., questioned how realistic the parcel size is. Before adopting this amendment, he suggested the need to consider a range of possible outcomes with the goal of avoiding unintended consequences. Martin also expressed some concerns about the open space requirements in the latest draft.

There was no motion regarding Article 26.

Article 30 *Expansion of Assisted Living Overlay Option Plan (ALoop) (George L Richards, et al.)*

This expansion relates to an assisted living proposal for 200 Pond Road. George Richards and Chris Yetman presented preliminary information about the project. The land parcel is split between Natick (5.25 acres) and Wellesley (4.40 acres). The assisted living facility would be on the Natick portion, leaving the Wellesley portion undeveloped. The disruption for neighbors was described as minimal, the distance to the nearest building being about 600 feet. There would be 96 assisted living units and 34 memory care units. Traffic impact would be minimal since access would be close to Route 135. Water, sewer and electric infrastructure are in place nearby. Financial benefits to the Town, including no impact on schools, were cited.

Martin said our concern with this project related to possible impact on adjacent conservation land, but there was no evidence of an adverse impact.

The Committee thanked George and Chris for the presentation.

There was no motion regarding Article 30

Veterans housing

Martin and Claire described two properties as possible sites for Veteran's Housing: 60 Mill Street and 79 Superior Drive. The latter site abuts Lake Cochituate, and the committee discussed possible impact on the lake. There does not appear to be a proposal for either site at this point.

Open space inventory follow-up

Tabled

Goals for 2023

Tabled

Motion to adjourn by Doug D., seconded by David L.
Motion approved unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Minutes approved 4/13/2023