

NATICK OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 8, 2023 7:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting

In person at Natick Town Hall

Minutes

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

Guests:

Claire Rundelli, Planner/Conservation Agent

Saul Beaumont, Member, Charter and By-Law Review Committee

Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2022 and April 13, 2023

Approved 7-0-0

Charter By-Law Review Committee (CBRC)

Saul Beaumont explained that this Moderator-appointed Committee has 9 Members. The purpose of the CBRC is to review the provisions of the Natick Charter and the Natick By-Laws and report recommendations concerning any proposed amendments or revisions to Town Meeting. Saul said that the CBRC is seeking ideas for how to improve coordination within Town Administration and between Town Committees, and he encouraged us to consider suggesting improvements. He asked OSAC members to forward suggestions to Martin within two weeks.

Updates

- *Trails & Forest Stewardship Committee*: Doug reported that a Natick student had approached the TaFS Committee about building a bike trail in the Town Forest. The proposal was well-received, and the Committee will follow up regarding feasibility.

The Eagle Scouts have done an excellent job in completing repairs to the Woodland Street boardwalk on the Eisenmenger Trail.

The Trail Intersection Numbering project has been completed and the location numbers will be updated to the online Trail Maps.

Upgrades to the Trail Kiosks will be made this summer.

- *Community Preservation Act (CPA)*: Town Meeting approved the CPA By-Law. State approval is the next step. Then the Town will have 60 days to fill 9 Community Preservation Committee (CPC) positions. Specified Town Committees appoint 5 members and the Select Board appoints 4 members.

- *Scholarship*: Martin reported that the Ben Kessel Memorial Fund, established in memory of his nephew, awarded this year’s Natick High scholarship to trails super-volunteer and TaFS member Nate Lord.

Earth Day All Around Natick, April 29-30

The consensus of our evaluation discussion was that chilly, damp weather was a significant reason for disappointing attendance at the Town Common. Other considerations included:

20-table limit reduced the breadth of appeal

Little spillover from indoor Farmers Market

Town-wide emphasis may be confusing or dilute interest

The two OSAC-organized walks went well, and Claire expressed interest in leading periodic nature walks in the future.

Natick Days, September 9, 10am – 3pm

Doug D has reserved a table for TaFS and OSAC. Martin floated the notion of some type of attraction for our booth for future discussion.

Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The three articles OSAC endorsed all passed overwhelmingly at Town Meeting:

Article 15 Capital Equipment and Improvement (Town Administrator) – Item B4: South Natick Dam & Grove Park design \$85,000.

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

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

Woodland Street property

92A Woodland Street is a recently listed 0.92-acre undeveloped parcel. It was split in the past from a larger parcel formerly owned by Bob Eisenmenger. There has been developer interest and neighborhood concern. Claire described challenging elevation and environmental issues that would impact development. Members felt that ideally the property would be preserved, but at a minimum the right side, which includes wetlands, should be left in its natural state.

Priorities for Open Space Acquisition

Martin said that discussion of whether the Town should seek to acquire the above property led to the need for priorities for how to spend our limited money. He shared the three criteria for evaluating parcels stated in the 2002 Open Space & Recreation Plan, and the somewhat longer list in the 2012 Plan. He noted that the criteria were not included in the 2020 Plan but are still needed. Members agreed that criteria are important as the CPC begins to consider open space parcels.

Members felt we should start with the first three criteria from the 2012 Plan, but that areas “deficient in open space” should mention “particularly environmental justice areas” and that “environmentally sensitive areas” should include

“important wildlife habitats.” Martin asked members to try to word all this as concisely as possible and we would seek to adopt a policy at our next meeting.

Open space inventory follow-up

Tabled

Goals for 2023

Tabled

Motion to adjourn by Terry, seconded by David L.

Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes approved 7/6/2023