

NATICK OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, July 6, 2023
Hybrid Meeting- in person at Natick Town Hall and Zoom

Minutes

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

Guest: Claire Rundelli, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent

1. Approval of Minutes – June 8, 2023 Approved 5-0-0
2. Updates
 - a. Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee
Claire stated the previous meeting was rescheduled due to July 4th holiday, so they will be meeting this Monday, July 10th. In the meantime, the weed wrench for the meadow restoration and forest invasives has arrived and will be put to good use. A garden cart is expected to arrive next week. Strong UV protected plexiglass for the all the kiosks has been ordered. Once received, they will be cut to size and installed.
David Lodding noted that the trail on Graystone Lane has been well maintained and the wetlands area is teeming with wildlife.
 - b. Community Preservation Act (CPA)
Tax bills have gone out with the first CPA fund charge on it.
Claire reported the CPA By-Law language has not been approved by the MA Attorney General office yet. Once it is, she will let us know. She does not foresee a problem with getting the AG's approval.
 - c. Woodland Street Property
No update.
 - d. Other Updates
Claire reported St. Benedict's school has broken ground on the Union St. property. Natick has been selected for the DCR Community & Urban Forestry plan grant. The grant money will be used to develop a stewardship for Pickerel Pond and Sunkaway area. The town will be looking to work with Bay State Forestry on this project to do an inventory of the trees on the 163 acres. Additionally, the town will be coordinating with the Nipmuc tribe, Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee, and Conservation Committee on long term management goals focusing on indigenous management methods.

3. Planning Board Updates

No updates

Claire mentioned 314 Eliot St. has started prep on a single-family home. It is a very tight site- and it abuts a vernal pool.

4. Natick Days, Sept. 9, 10am-3pm

Claire will make a small scavenger hunt and will reach out to the artist who the painted Natick Town Forest map to get approval to use as a grand prize.

5. Priorities for Open Space Acquisition

Martin showed the 2012 Priorities for Open Space Acquisition document with some edits for 2023 as suggested at the last meeting.

Terri moved to approve the objectives for open space acquisition 2023. David L. seconded. Vote 5-0-0 to approve the following priorities:

- Areas that enhance existing open spaces, by creating larger contiguous parcels or connecting existing open space, neighborhoods, trails, or wildlife corridors
- Open space in areas of the town currently deficient in open space, particularly environmental justice areas
- Areas adjacent to rivers and ponds, environmentally sensitive areas, and important wildlife habitats

6. Open Space inventory follow-up

Will take up at a future meeting.

7. Goals for 2023

Martin showed the listing (1-7) of the Goals for 2023 from the 1/12/2023 Minutes.

#1. Martin will reach out to the West Natick condo management companies to see about use of open space for trails.

#2. MetroWest Collaborative will be handling the powerline trail issue going forward. OSAC will not be involved.

#3. Claire mentioned that the summer intern is currently working on the drafts of herbicide/pesticide educational materials. Should have them by the end of August.

#4. Claire met with Lisa Standley who will do a broad brush of the Town Forest in regard to the invasive species. We are looking to work with Natick High School students in the AP Environmental program to do Town Forest work going towards class credit.

#5. Nothing has been officially announced yet (will hear in August), but Claire is pretty sure we will be getting the grant for the Pickerel Pond boardwalk to connect North and South trails.

#6. Waiting on easement decisions of the Union St. development to be worked out.

#7. Claire thought it would be a good idea to see if we could secure funding to make the Town Forest ADA compliant from the parking area through the Meadow. Terri added it also would be nice to make signage for the visually impaired population. Claire will reach out to the ADA coordinator in Newton for advice and resources.

8. Other Business

Claire noted that her job title has been changed from Open Space Planner to Environmental Planner to better reflect the work that she has been doing.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, August 10, 2023.

Motion to adjourn by Terri, seconded by David L.

Vote 5-0-0 Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm

Minutes approved 8/10/2023