

OSC Committee Minutes 4/25/16

David called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

Members present Linda Herrera, Cynthia Boettner, David Schochet, Larry Flaccus, John Wheeler, Norm Beebe, Jim Perry, and Joel Dwight

The minutes from 3/8/16 were reviewed and accepted with four edits.

New agenda items:

The pipeline is on hold, Norm pointed out Maura Healey had commented about how unusual it was for the electric rate payers to pay for the infrastructure. Larry said the Otis forest crossing and the controversy about the electric rate payers funding the project are still ongoing. David told us pipeline related questions would still be on the warrant for town meeting including \$15,000 to put towards pipeline issues with \$13,750 going to FRCOG and the remainder going to the selectmen. John talked about the proposed trucking regulations that were designed with pipeline related truck traffic in mind.

Larry told us article 23 in the town warrant is authorization for up \$500 per year revolving fund. Norm said the Recreation Commission has a similar fund but he thought that one did not accumulate but went away at the end of the year. Larry explained that our account is money that we raise and not tax generated funds but it still needs to be approved at town meeting so we can raise and spend up to \$500 without further authorization. The Rec Commission money comes from user fees. Norm said he had spoken with the town accountant about the spending of funds in their account and it is similar to the OSC money. An entity with a board can have the board approve expenditures and then have the selectmen approve that. The accountant explained to Norm there are many different accounts set up in many different ways.

Warrant article 29 asks the town to remain neutral or oppose the pipeline. David felt if there is discussion on this the prior opposing actions taken by the town should be noted. Open Space has written several letters in opposition to the pipeline. John said there is a town forum this Wednesday evening at the elementary school starting at 6:30pm to help explain the articles on the town warrant. The next article is the one about the \$15,000 with the vast bulk of it going to FRCOG. The group thought it should be amended so the money would be set aside and used as needed. Norm stated he thought we should not set the money aside for a project that is not moving forward. Joel said he thinks the Kinder Morgan legal team has calculated every contingency and this is a predetermined choice they are exercising for now. The group decided not to speak either way on this item. The next article is the one about the sighting of large scale and industrial facilities. It was written by FRCOG and sent out to the various towns. Compliance would be determined by the Selectboard. This will also be discussed at the forum on Wednesday. Larry and David felt we should support it as a committee in that it would be useful should the pipeline project reactivate. Jim wondered if this might apply to high voltage transmission lines, transfer stations, etc. The group voted to support the article.

The next article 33 involving truck traffic and the need for a use permit, documentation of road conditions before and after, and the posting of a bond. Joel wondered how much impact it would have on local contractors. Waivers could be requested. Jim talked about things he had learned and written about involving many of the same issues. The group approved supporting the article with Joel abstaining.

Warrant article 34 includes the open space development bylaw. Norm and John pointed out that the

open space development bylaw provides an option and John emphasized that this replaced the cluster housing bylaw. Cynthia told us about hearing that this sort of thing might make properties more attractive for development and so lead to more development. John explained how this bylaw would exercise much more control over development than would the current cluster bylaw.

John also told us about a state law which allows a developer to ignore local law unless 10% of housing in town is affordable, we are currently at 5%. He also explained it's important to have these development bylaws in a detail rich form where specific points can be waived but if there isn't enough detail it is much harder or impossible to add more detail later.

Other business:

David said Audabon is trying to buy more land from the Patten Hill farm to add to high ledges. 168 acres for \$277,000. High ledges is currently 630 acres Patten Hill farm is putting the farm land into APR and the rest to Audabon. David then told us about the Connect Project from the Sylvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge bringing together a large amount of data so other nature conservancy groups can benefit from the data available.

Next David talked about the Mount Grace land trust efforts to create a 30,000 acre corridor. John said Tony Borton told him the project in Shelburne is still being worked on. Linda said the South Shelburne portion isn't getting a lot of support and the Patten portion is going another route as mentioned above. \

David then went on the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage to make a wild contiguous joining from Vermont on into the Hudson Highlands to the west of us. Larry spoke about this being discussed nationally. For instance grizzlies in Yellowstone could be part of a breeding population in Canada instead of an island population.

Ongoing business:

Linda reported that Jim Richardson would be glad to help with the tree identification project. She also said as the project becomes more organized we could approach Mary Prouse about funding. Larry thinks we should identify the trees first then see how much it would cost for signs etc. Norm thought maybe we could look into putting in more new trees. Cynthia will explore how Regreen Springfield worked on their tree assessment. David thought we could have fundraisers towards retreeing the village. We could go the way of making Tree ID happen or we could go in the direction of the Selectboard form a tree committee. Norm thought we should begin by trying to do a tree inventory. Larry suggested mapping out a little route of 3 or 4 streets and identifying those trees first. Cynthia thought maybe a student intern could be found. John suggested the Conway School of Landscape Design. David will speak further with Jim and call the Business Association.

David then spoke about his discussion with Joe Rae regarding endangered species on the Sweetheart property and reported he had a good discussion with him.

Cynthia said the two scout leaders are enthusiastic about pulling garlic mustard.

Meeting adjourned 9:09 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Dwight
Secretary Pro Tem