

Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes 6-3-2019

Members Present: Larry Flaccus, David Schochet, Jim Perry, Norm Beebe, Joel Dwight

Guests: Whit Sanford, Madelaine Stark, Susan Stark, Owen Wormser

Larry called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm

Minutes from the April 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

One addition to the agenda - David will talk about Tree Walk signs

Madelaine Stark came to share her ideas for improving the Singley lot. The Starks and Simpsons bought the Singley building and took it down. Madelaine is working with Owen Wormser from Local Harmony, a non-profit that would like to improve the space incorporating gardening, art and education. Owen told us community support would be needed in building and maintenance. They will be making a presentation to the Selectboard. Susan said that it doesn't look very nice and a new building may not happen for awhile. She said it could be a great spot for the public to enjoy. Ideas include performance art, stone work, seminars, discussions, and seating. They would like to get the community involved in design, building, and maintenance. Owen said the meeting with OSC is a starting point and they would like to gather input. Larry suggested they might want to talk to the Business Association. Whit said the Business Assoc is currently working on and revamping the Holiday decorations and she suggested they come up with a rough design to start with which could be improved upon. Whit thought the SFABA might help by putting together a committee that could work on the project. Larry said they should look into any permitting that might be needed. David thought there was work to do in involving the public in an improvement on a private property. Owen said he had worked with a similar situation with the planters on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Jim thought the Bridge of Flowers entrance work might serve as a guide by finding out what they did as far as permitting and private versus public land. Norm thought they might want to talk with the Art Garden and that he would also like to see a place where little kids and parents might be able to enjoy the space. Larry suggested talking with the entities already mentioned as well as local businesses and to firm up their plan a little more before they presented to the Selectboard. Owen said they are starting out in a general way and as it goes further it will get down to a specific plan. Norm said how the River Trail is being planned out now and we are gaining more detail on that over time. Susan said that one of the things that might be made available might be a public water bubbler. Norm thought surrounding businesses would see a positive result if the project were done. Madelaine thought other local points of interest could be incorporated to help make people aware of them. Whit said she has been where there has been great signage and informational kiosks that worked out well. Larry thought contacting the Visitors Center would be useful. The committee thanked the group for coming to the meeting.

Larry then directed us to talk about Tree Signs. David reported the American Basswood sign and stand are gone. But Jim has the sign and stand. All other signs are good except for the White Fir on Severance St. Jim will try to call Carol at that address to see if they have the sign. The Little Leaf Linden sign is in need of cleaning. He will also re-prune the Black Locust sign on Water St. Joel will talk with Rita about reestablishing the Bass wood sign in front of her house and what it should say. Jim has money from selling brochures and will see Angel about getting into the Open Space Revolving Fund.

An M & M Extension Trail Walk will be on the 6th at 1:30pm. Jim will be at the walk and noted to be handicap accessible at the Falls end would be expensive and wouldn't really yield much reward for the investment. Larry said grant people look at handicap accessibility and we should get a quote both ways - with and without it. Norm reminded us that we have money from the state for a feasibility study and that we had backup money from the town. Norm thought the grant was for \$4000. Larry thought we had asked for \$4000 and Melissa from FRCOG had gotten \$6000. Whit said funding for the project will come from multiple grantors and told us about place making grants that can run into millions if multiple projects are combined in a grant proposal. Larry wondered if a Pothole Observation Deck could be incorporated in to the project. Whit thought \$25000 was appropriated for a feasibility study several years ago for an observation deck closer to the Mayhew building but she doesn't know if that was ever done. Norm suggested we focus on the Trail for now. Whit thought it was a good idea to focus on the Trail but it might act as a catalyst to start the ball rolling on a larger grant to fund multiple projects. She told us it is a private group that does the funding, not tax money. The upcoming walk is for Josh and us to get together and see what he has in mind. To see if his vision is the same as ours before he finishes his report. Jim pointed out that easements will be needed if we go forward. Whit said the grant may come in phases instead of coming in as one big grant. Larry said Jim may want to ask Josh about how the project could be broken down into stages over time. Norm had spoken with John Lawless and let him know we will be walking the trail again. Whit wondered if Mayhews might want to become involved in funding. The group will meet at the Deerfield Ave parking lot near the Quonset hut.

Jim told us he and his daughter cleared out the Wooded Loop Trail but it still needs to be resigned and blazed. Larry said Helen Payne will be back in July and he will contact her.

Larry told us we still have 7 vacancies for our committee. Whit said she could get our membership needs onto the Facebook page they have about civic interest needs. There are about 300 people that look at it. She said the GSFBA is getting some younger interest. David said he thought we had 15 members when we are full, 11 appointed and 4 from committees.

Larry had contacted Joan Greenfield and sent a notice of this meeting. But he hadn't heard from her.

Norm reported the Recreation Committee was looking into working on the Softball field. Norm has lined up a table tennis table from Dick's Sporting goods and is working on a way to pick it up. He also said they had 21 girls sign up for Softball and the Rec. committee is at 4 members. Whit asked Norm if a backboard might be put in the plans for the tennis courts.

Agriculture, Planning, and Conservation committee members were not present at this meeting. Next meeting Monday June 24, 2019. Meeting adjourned 8:29 pm.