

Shelburne Open Space Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2019
Shelburne Town Hall

Present: David Schochet (chair), Larry Flaccus, Jim Perry, Tom Johnson, Joel Dwight, Joanie Greenfield
Guests: Art Schwenger

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Minutes:

The minutes of the June 24, 2019 meeting were read. Larry Flaccus moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom Johnson. All approved the motion.

New Member on the OSC:

A warm welcome was extended to the newest member of the Open Space Committee, Joanie Greenfield.

Mahican Mohawk Trail Extension:

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding construction /extension of the Mahican Mohawk Trail from the existing trail that extends along the river to Wilcox Hollow, in an up-river direction across private property through the portion owned by the Town of Shelburne where the route is not prohibitively steep or rocky for inexpensive trail development. The longest portion of the trail would pass through property owned by Jane Hanford of Greenfield, MA. Art Schwenger knows Ms. Hanford well, and he recently met with her to discuss aspects of the proposed trail development. Art indicated that Ms. Hanford is potentially in support of the trail development, but issues regarding trail construction, maintenance and financial issues will need to be addressed. According to Art, Ms. Hanford expressed concern about how wide an easement would have to be associated with such a trail, and what reimbursement she might receive for granting such an easement. Another aspect of the issue is whether Ms. Hanford would be willing to sell her property and, if so, where funds to purchase would be found (Town? Franklin Land Trust?).

It was concluded that once the proposed trail map is provided by Timber and Stone (anticipated this week, according to David), a meeting would be arranged to include Ms. Hanford, Art, and a representative from the Franklin Land Trust. David will call the FLT to identify the FLT rep to attend this meeting. There is a need to arrive at a solution with Ms. Hanford soon, for funds that FLT currently has for the current stage of trail development expire in September.

Art Schwenger was thanked for his important contribution to this aspect of trail development, after which he left and the Open Space Committee moved on to the next topic.

Wooded Loop Trail:

Jim Perry, David Schachet and Joanie Greenfield met with Margaret Payne, her daughter, Helen Payne Watt, and Helen's son, Jesse on July 18th, 2019, to walk the "Wooded Loop Trail," consisting of the Yellow and Orange Trails that lie on the Payne property. The trails are currently in rough shape following logging operations, tree blow-downs, and vegetation overgrowth. The OSC would like to restore the trails, add interpretive signs, and more to make them once again user friendly. The OSC members who attended the June 18th walk learned that Ms. Watt, who lives in Toronto, presently is responsible for property development. She is well aware of many forest issues, having interacted in the past with staff at the Harvard Forest. Ms. Watt is very supportive of upgrades to the Wooded Loop Trail, but before moving forward asked for a check list of the necessary development and maintenance actions, and identification of who (OSC or property owner) would be responsible for carrying them out. Jim Perry developed such a list and presented them to the OSC, along with a map of the trail that he had generated from his GPS track on the July 18 trek. Some of the details of the development and maintenance actions were discussed and refined. Jim planned to update the list within the coming day. Larry will mail the revised task list to Ms. Watt, and he will also ask Ms. Payne if he and other members of the OSC can meet with her property manager, Kurt Benson, to discuss certain issues on the list that are to be carried out on behalf of the property owner.

Larry brought up the possibility of extending a leg off the Wooded Loop Trail across Payne property to Rte. 2. This would increase ready access to the trail, thereby increase use of the trail. It also would open up the possibility for connecting to a trail on the Flaccus property across Rte. 2.

OSC vacancies:

David mentioned that many vacancies still exist on the OSC and asked if anyone had new information. Tom Johnson mentioned that he had approached two members of the community, asking them to consider joining, but without positive results.

Conflict of Interest Training:

OSC members were reminded by David to keep their COI training up to date.

Reports of Committees:

Tom Johnson informed the OSC members of the most recent Planning Board meeting, in which proposed changes to zoning by-laws, particularly with regard to impact on affordable housing in Shelburne, were discussed with Town Council, two representatives of the Zoning Board Authority, and one member of the Select Board.

Adjournment:

Moved by Larry Flaccus, seconded by Tom Johnson, approved at 9:10.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Johnson, Secretary pro-tem