

Approved 2/22/21

Shelburne OSC Meeting 1/25/21

Larry called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM

Members Present: Larry Flaccus, David Schochet, Norm Beebe, Thor Holbek, Jim Perry, Tom Johnson, Garth LaPointe, Joel Dwight

Guests: Bob Higgins, Lynn Pledger, Lara Radysh, Richard Stafursky, John Wheeler

Joel appointed secretary pro tem

Richard Stafursky introduced himself stating he is not a Shelburne resident but grew up in Conway and is the president of a land trust which is just across the Deerfield River from us and had been in existence since 2001. He said one notable difference between the land trust he is part of and others is that his does not allow easements.

Minutes from the December 2020 OSC meeting were reviewed and **accepted** with a motion by Tom and a second by David

Thor was recognized and welcomed as the newest member to the OSC

New Agenda Items:

John Wheeler representing the Planning Board joined us to speak about **the Community Preservation Act (CPA)**. The Selectboard and Planning Board are both in favor of Shelburne adopting the CPA which could result in the town receiving funds not available to us now. Among things this funding might be used for would be the hazard mitigation plan, open space, recreation, and historic preservation. It would be paid for by a 1-3% increase in our annual property tax. Greenfield, Conway, Deerfield, and Northfield are local communities that have adopted the CPA as well as more than half of the towns in the state. Adoption of CPA is an arduous process, involving informational meetings, town resident input, Town Meeting presentations and votes at Town Meeting. A motion was made and seconded to send a letter of support to the Planning Board re: their moving forward with next steps in this process.. The next Planning Board meeting is Wednesday 1/27/21.

Ongoing Business:

M+M Trail Extension-

Norm reported for the survey working group comprised of Norm, Tom, Garth and Jim. They have reached out to Terry (the Town Administrator) to begin the process of receiving Selectboard approval **to speak with the town attorney** in order to make sure our next steps addressed any and all contingencies that might present themselves regarding the boundary survey, easements, liability issues. The Selectboard meets later this month and the general consensus was to have Jim, Larry, and David

Speak with the town attorney once approval is gained. **Norm made a motion to seek approval from the Selectboard to approach the Town Attorney , seconded by Garth and passed by unanimous vote..**

Larry has sent the survey working group a list of suggested land surveyors provided by the Franklin Land Trust (FLT). Guest Lynn then asked a question about how a trail corridor width is determined. Jim explained some of the considerations which basically create a pleasing visual corridor for hikers. Larry also said our MTRP grant has funds to pay for the surveying.

Norm told the group he **spoke with Melissa from FLT** about a possible Conservation Restriction and how it might be used in **creating the trail across the Hanford property** linking Wilcox Hollow to the town owned land. He also asked if there was a tax credit available to the Hanfords to cover any difference in the valuation of their property with and without the Conservation Restriction put in place. **Melissa told Norm** she thought the Hanfords would receive more financial benefit from the Voluntary Public Access Fund,(VPAF) which could yield them \$10/linear foot of trail. The estimated 1700 feet of trail could give them \$17,000 for a permanent easement (or \$8,500 for a ten year agreement). Melissa will look further into it. (She thought that the VPAF would require a 20 ft wide corridor to buffer the actual 3 ft wide trail) . **Norm will speak with Art Schwenger about contacting the Hanfords** and hopefully Melissa could be involved in a meeting with Jane Hanford's son who has the decision making role regarding the property. (Jane has had a negative impression of the FLT caused by her perception that they had flagged a trail across her property in the past but that has now been discovered to have been done by a private citizen and had nothing to do with the FLT—this according to Art.)

Tom and Larry both thought Norm should be included in a meeting between Art, Melissa, and Jane's son. This will probably be in the form of a zoom meeting because Jane's son does not live locally.

Tom said the state geologist at UMass is putting together a LIDAR map of the Hanford property which will show elevations.

Norm said Melissa thought establishing (marking, pruning, rock clearing) the trail could most likely be accomplished by volunteer labor. Norm is also going to ask Melissa about possible help from the FLT with easements at the Deerfield Ave end of the proposed trail. Norm kept minutes from the Working Group meetings and has sent them to all OSC members and Lara.

David was tasked with creating a list of standard talking points that can be used when contacting trail abutters. Larry thought a newspaper article could prove helpful., and referenced the recent Recorder interview. Lynn told us she lives on Green St. on the Buckland side of the village, and that she would very much like to use a trail connecting the village to the M+M Trail. She will send a letter of support to Tom.

Disabilities Access Report - David spoke with a compliance officer from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. The MAAB is the State agency which promulgates and enforces design requirements for all kinds of construction to insure handicap-accessibility in the built environment, but has no guidelines for hiking trails. When David described the trail's setting and the unique challenges involved in laying out the trail and the difficulty, expense and even feasibility involved in creating a handicap-accessible

trail, the compliance officer thought that the project would most likely not “trigger” the full MAAB requirements, but that any constructed features (walkways, bridges, steps) would have to meet MAAB specifications. There is the possibility, he said, that we might have to apply for a “variance” from MAAB specs. David and Jim will speak further with the compliance officer to establish whether or not this project falls under Mass Architectural Access Board purview. David said there are 3 different types of variances which might be used and he has put in a call to set up another meeting which will include Jim.

Lara asked David for the name of the compliance officer and he was reluctant to share it. Lara said she will speak with the town concerning refusal to share information with her and she wanted to make sure that was noted in the minutes of the meetings. Joel assured her it was included in the minutes. Later in the meeting, David apologized and did share the name.

Educational Signage - Larry has not spoken with Vacker Signs as of yet. Jim spoke with a forester who has had input on signs for other trails. He will help Jim by looking at the interpretive signs we have in mind, and also assist him with more professional maps which could be used in brochures. Jim told us the Heath Trails group is currently working on signage for some of their trails.

Jim reports that he has created 2 instructional PDFs about routing and installing signs. He has shared them with the OSC members as well as Buckland and Heath trail groups.

David asked Jim about how we might achieve a uniform “look” to our trail signage. Jim noted we do not have a logo-- which could help in this.

David reminded the group of the upcoming MASS Open Space Conference, which will be held in March, via Zoom....

Committee Reports

Tom reported for the Planning Board that they are continuing talking about affordable housing and home based businesses within the village.

Norm reported for the Recreation Committee.

David told us that Carolyn Wheeler informed him that the Ag Committee is currently inactive. They are planning on meeting sometime in the spring when they will select a chairperson and liaison member to the OSC.

Bob Higgins then spoke about how difficult the trail is going to be for himself and Lara and that is not being acknowledged. Lara said she doesn't feel that the OSC is addressing their situation and being considerate of all her concerns.

Tom pointed out he had objected to an earlier proposed entrance to the trail at the Topolski property because of a much closer proximity to houses than would be the case at Bob and Lara's and at the same time he endorsed the entrance at Deerfield Ave.

Norm reminded us that the OSC had been receptive to some of Lara and Bob's concerns, and gave examples--an exit from the trail had been proposed coming up to S. Maple St. at the village edge of the Sweetheart property. After visiting this sight, we had agreed not to pursue that route because of its overlook of Bob and Lara's house. We have also eliminated a proposed picnic area on the plateau area of the trail up from the old tennis courts. Norm also pointed out the property is public land, owned by the town.

Bob said some residents use the property now and that doesn't bother him but he has concerns including erosion, river access, and litter. Norm responded that the Recreation Committee is committed to having ongoing trail oversight to make sure any problems are dealt with appropriately. Garth said he felt the OSC has listened to Lara and Bob's concerns, but he thinks the trail would be in the town's best interest. Lara shared her concern that it is a wild area that will forever be changed and these changes could not be reversed.

Larry said we are still gathering information and he is working on invasive species concerns with Cynthia Boettner.

Lara invited any OSC members who would like to take a look from her property to see how close the proposed trail would be. Joel said he would like to accept Lara and Bob's offer to visit their property to better understand their concerns as to the proximity of the proposed trail. Lara will send an email with a proposed time that interested members could visit.

Richard Stafurski asked that he be allowed an opportunity to speak further at our next meeting. David will include him on the agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Dwight

Secretary Pro Tem