Shelburne Open Space Committee Meeting August 25, 2025

Joan called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

Meeting recorded on Zoom.

Members Present: Joan LaPierre, Peggy Warwick, Helen Watt, Caitlyn Slowinski, Norman Beebe, Jim Perry, John Wheeler, Ted Sicker, and Joel Dwight

No Visitors or Guests

Minutes of the July meeting reviewed and accepted unanimously as presented. Motion to accept by Ted Sicker. Seconded by Norm Beebe.

Old Business:

Trail Status Update: Jim reports the Red Loop Trail bridge has been installed with the help of Helen and her family and Garth. Norman helped cut the bridge kit at Jim’s house prior to that. Liability waivers were filled out and submitted to Terry. Terry suggested everyone including committee members fill out a liability waiver prior to any work.

Mill Road Survey and Woodlands Partnership Grant: Norm reports nothing has changed with the survey. Research is ongoing. We have $3,500 in the Woodland Partnership Grant already approved  to be used as payment for the survey. Norm explained the Woodlands Partnership Grant is something we apply for yearly. We learn about grant availability in March and hear back from them in April or May. Norm explained we are determining where the Mill Road footprint is exactly so we can access town owned land and we can provide a walking/hiking opportunity to village residents. He told the group it has been a slow process but we are making headway. Jim said he heard federal funding cuts to the states may have made the Woodlands Partnership money available to be cut roughly in half. Joan said there is a Mass Trails grant program available with a twenty percent match. Norm pointed out labor can sometimes be used as part of the matching amount. Ted will look into the availability of funds. He has grant writing experience. Helen has not heard anything as of yet about grant monies from the Woodlands Partnership.

Newsletter: Erika wrote an article about the OSRP for the September newsletter. An article for October could be about the Red Loop Trail and the new bridge. That article would be due in September.

Joan spoke with Jessica at FRCOG who made a few minor alterations to the OSRP and is submitting our plan to the state. The ten year plan will then be available.

Joan told us an open town meeting for ideas to spend CPA money is tomorrow evening at Memorial Hall.

Jim said Thursday at 5 pm there is a meeting in the Buckland Town Hall concerning the Deerfield River wild and scenic designation. Online access can be found on the Deerfield River Watershed Association website.

New Business:

Joan asked what a new trail might cost. Norm and Jim explained the cost is very specific to the trail and influenced greatly by how much you want to spend. There really is no set amount for making a new trail. Ted asked if there are other trails that are potentially of interest beyond the ones at Wells Memorial Forest and the Wheeler farm.

Joan wondered about the feasibility of a donation box at the trail heads. After discussion of donation boxes Caitlyn volunteered to check donation boxes weekly if we decide to deploy them.

Joan discussed our available accounts. The first account would be with new Woodland Partnership money so that is at zero until we apply again. Norm added that money is always designated to specific projects. There is an account of $34,229.65. This is available to be used for the purchase of properties for which the town has the right of first refusal. Joan explained the details concerning the use of funds in the Open Space Contribution account. Jim thought we have a revolving account. Norm thought we should speak with Angel and Terry about an account to hold donations. Norm also thought that perhaps the town could set up a fund that could be used each year. He said the recreation committee has a yearly fund of $3,000 and unspent monies go back to the town at the end of the year.

Joan has an open space handbook given to her by Larry that lists possible grant sources and she will share that with Ted.

Other Business:

Joan and Ted have been going over the OSRP portion of the town website in an attempt to make is more streamlined and user friendly. Ted showed the meeting through shared screen some of the work her has been doing for the Shelburne Center library. He and Joan have been sharing by this method and Ted will add additional committee members that would like to be included.

Jim said we traditionally had a word document with contact information for all OSC members.

Liaison Reports: Ag Commission- Caroline was not present but asked John to tell us they are planning on another screening of their historical Shelburne farm photographs.

Planning Board- John reports there was no meeting in August but their administrative assistant is working on cleaning up their website and making it more user friendly. They will be surveying Shelburne residents to see what they think the Planning Board should be working on. John will be in contact with Jim to get together and look at trail possibilities on the Wheeler farm.

Conservation Commission- no liaison present

Recreation Committee: Norm reports they failed to achieved a quorum for the August meeting.

Joan talked about the McGovern farm tour on Wednesday August 27th and that would be participants will need to sign up. Joan invited everyone to share ideas on things we could cover at our monthly meetings.

Ribbon cutting tomorrow at the new BSE playground.

Visitor and Guest Comments: none

Our next meeting will be September 22nd at 7pm by Zoom

Ted Sicker moved to adjourn. Norm Beebe seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:06pm

Respectfully submitted by Joel Dwight, Secretary.