

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Open Space Committee



Academy Building - 66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Bridgewater Open Space Committee Agenda for the Meeting Convening on Thursday, May 19, 2022 @ 7:00 PM

Disclosure: Pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain Covid-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, this meeting of the Open Space Committee for the

Town of Bridgewater will be fully remote and accessible to the public through remote participation to the greatest extent possible. There will be no in person attendance permitted. Citizens who wish to tune in to the meeting may do so via Zoom or Facebook Live.

Link to join meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82642250212>

Call to Order at 7:00PM

Approval of Draft Minutes

- 12/14/2021
- 2/17/2022

(No meetings in January, March, & April)

Public Comment

New Business

- Lake Nippenicket Action Focus Team proposal - Melissa Ramondetta

Old Business

- Lake Nippenicket – Eileen Hiney
Draft Letter to Council Community & Economic Development Subcommittee re: Petition for
Discontinuance of the Abandoned Portion of Lakeside Drive
- Letters in support of grant applications: Old State Farm Trail-submitted; Stiles & Hart-not submitted
- Wyman Meadows
- Posting website information for Town Parklands – Lauren Webb
- Tree Committee Report – Nicole Holmes
- Hanson Farm update – Eileen

Next Meeting: June 16, 2022 - 7pm

Adjournment

Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
December 14, 2021, 7:00 pm
Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Committee Members present: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Maureen Minasian, Kevin Mandeville;

Members absent: Nicole Holmes, Lauren Webb

Guests: Monica Bentley, Pat Neary, Melissa Ramondetta, Rob Battista

Call To Order: A quorum was present. The meeting, conducted on Zoom, was called to order at 7:05 pm. (The meeting was inadvertently not recorded.) Eileen noted that town staff, Josh McGraw, has offered his assistance with posting minutes, sending meeting notices to committee members, and setting up Zoom meetings. He also created letterhead for the committee and provided the town meeting agenda template. His help is most appreciated.

Approval Of Meeting Minutes: A motion to approve Minutes of the October 13, 2021 meeting was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. (There was no quorum for the meeting scheduled in November.)

Public Comment: Guests were invited to comment on agenda items and did so under the business topics below, as noted.

New Business:

Lake Nippenicket:

Lakeside Drive site visit:

On December 5th, Eileen met with Joan Pierce, Land Agent for the Southeast District of the Mass. Dept. of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, to visit the town-and State-owned property on Lake Nippenicket, at the end of Lakeside Drive. Joan pointed out that a sign prohibiting public access to the driveway in front of the Keith house does not accurately reflect the property lines for the town-owned property. She has spoken with town staff about the need to have the property surveyed to protect the town's interest. Pat Neary said she believes a survey was completed when the property was acquired by the town and has copies of plot plans for the area that she can share.

Proposed restaurant:

In late 2019, a proposal to build a restaurant on Route 104 on the shore of Lake Nippenicket was submitted by the Claremont Companies. At a joint Zoning Board/Planning Board hearing held in 2019, many people objected to the proposal, which was subsequently withdrawn. In November, residents of Lakeside Drive were invited by Claremont Companies to an "Open House" to review revised plans for the restaurant. Committee members discussed whether the Open Space Committee should consider submitting comments once the proposal is re-submitted for consideration. It was agreed that Lake Nippenicket is an important Town open space resource and the OSC should review any proposals that might impact the Lake and take appropriate action.

Zoning Revisions:

Revisions to the town's zoning ordinances have been under consideration for some time. Melissa Ramondetta brought to the committee's attention her concerns with: 1. the definition of "Open Space" under the section that deals with "Open Space Conservation Development" (Section 11); and. 2. with the inclusion of buffers within the definition of "developable" land within a tract. (Section 8.3.5) These

provisions apply only to projects that seek approval under Section 8.3. Eileen will contact the Planning Board to get additional information about these sections.

Old Business

Hanson Farm.

A second site visit at Hanson Farm was held on 11/ 29 so that representatives of Wildlands Trust could view the property. In attendance were: Bob Hanson, David Hanson, Scott McFaden and Erik Boyer, from Wildlands Trust, Michael Dutton, Jennifer DeBoisbriand, Eileen Hiney, Gina Guasconi, Carlton Hunt and Kevin Mandeville. As a next step, Jennifer will set up a meeting of the involved CPC and OSC members and town staff to create a plan and assign duties for this project. Scott recommended that, while the appraisal does not need to be done immediately, the town should engage an appraiser as soon as possible as appraisers are extremely busy.

Tree Committee. No report as Nicole Holmes was absent.

Town website. No report as Lauren Webb was absent.

Wyman Meadow Site Visit.

Immediately following the Hanson Farm site visit on 11/29, Scott MacFaden and Erik Boyer met with Eileen Hiney and Maureen Minasian at Wyman Meadow on Plymouth St. The site visit was limited due to the presence of hunters, but the group was able to review detailed 4'x 3' plans drawn up for the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater in 2002. Looking at the plans, it was possible to come up with preliminary ideas about how a partnership between the town and the WT could provide greater access and amenities at this town open space parcel while providing access to the adjacent WT North River Preserve. Another site visit will be conducted later this winter. (The hard copies of the NRTB plans were loaned to WT for their review.)

These plans are at: <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/4332/2002-Wyman-Meadown-Map> Also available is a "Wyman Meadow Conservation Area Management Area Plan and Handbook" written in 2002 at: <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/2437/Wyman-Meadow-Parkland-Plans?bidId=>

Canoe launch at Sunset Drive

Monica Bentley, a member of the Taunton River Stewardship Council, reported at the October OSC meeting that she has brought up to the town the idea of a canoe launch at the end of Sunrise Drive. The OSC was in favor of writing a letter of support for this idea. Monica reported that before looking into this any further, the town will set up a meeting to discuss the feasibility and acceptability of this with the residents of Sunrise Drive sometime in February.

Next Meeting

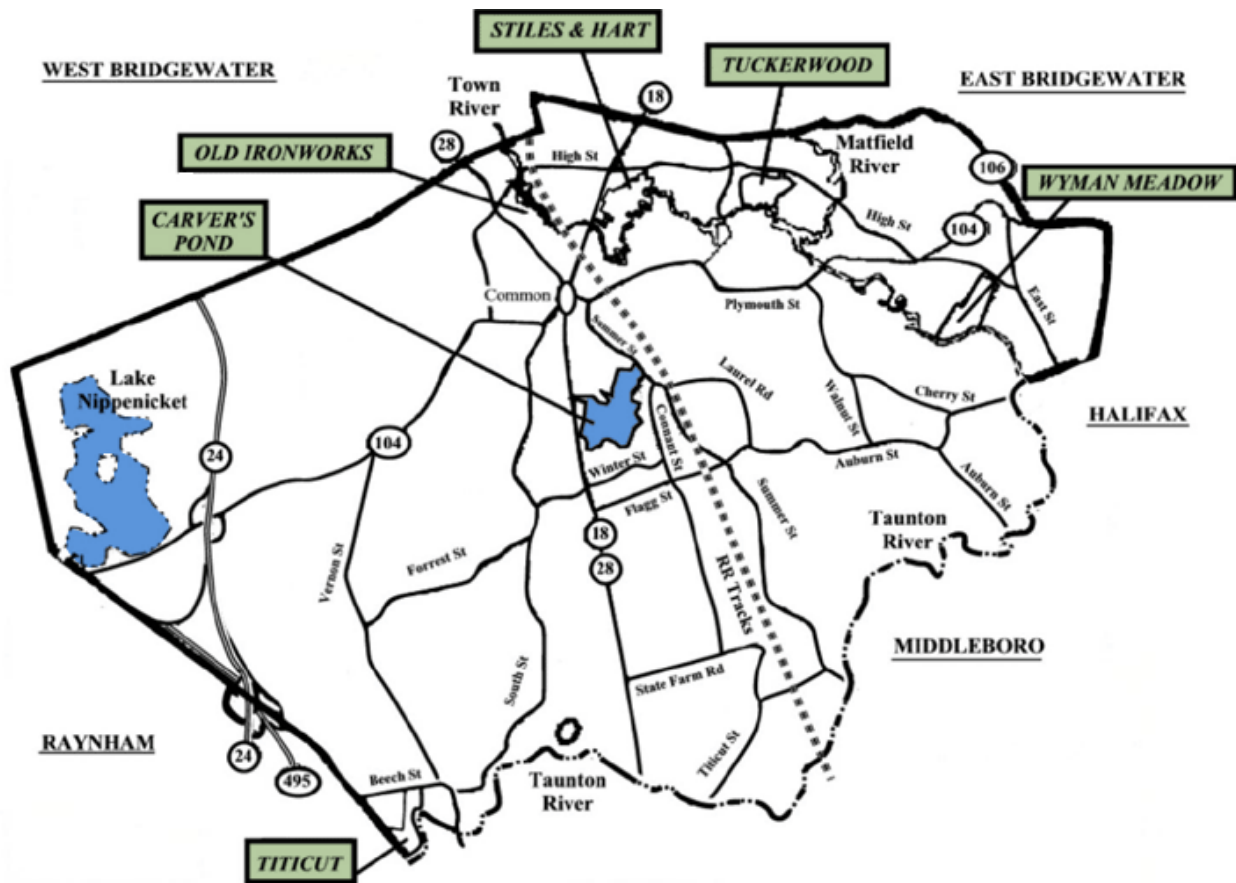
The next OSC meeting will be **Thursday, January 20, 2022 @7:00 pm**. (Note: Jan. meeting was subsequently cancelled.) Hereafter, OSC meetings will be held on the 3rd Thursdays at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Submitted by Eileen Hiney

Bridgewater, MA Parks and Conservation Land



(Source: Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater site on the [Internet Archive](#))

Titicut Conservation Area

Description

Titicut had once been the site of a Wampanoag village. Archeological digs have unearthed artifacts dating not only hundreds but also thousands of years ago.

Titicut was also a shipbuilding yard in the early 19th century. The original dry docks can still be seen today. During the 1950s Titicut served as a summer camp. It was purchased by the City with a Self-Help grant in 1976.

Points of Interest

- Several small brooks, a pond, and 2,000 feet of river frontage
- A clear view of the Taunton River through the trees
- Trail system of old roads suited for hiking
- Camping and tenting by permit from the Conservation Commission

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001. For more historical information, see [The Taunton River Stewardship Council's History of the Titicut Site.](#))

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Titicut from Bridgewater Center:

- Go south on South Street (begins at Public Library) for 4.1 miles to end
- Turn right onto Green Street and proceed a short .3 mile
- Turn left onto Beech Street and proceed an even shorter .2 mile; park entrance is on the left

Parking Location



Iron Works Park

Description

Established in 1691, the Bridgewater Iron Works at Stanley was the first to produce iron in the American Colonies and by 1860 it had become the largest producer of iron in the U.S. During the Civil War it manufactured ammunition and iron siding for our ships. The Iron Works industrial site was abandoned in 1988 and the land donated to the City of Bridgewater. Today a new forest is establishing itself on and around the ruins of the old stone and slate foundry building.

Points of Interest

- A privately-owned dam with fish ladder to help alewife herring migrate toward Lake Nippenicket
- Walking trail on both sides of the Town River
- Within walking distance of the center of Bridgewater

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001. For more information, see the [Nunckatesset Greenway website](#).)

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Iron Works from Bridgewater Center:

- Go north on Route 18 for 1 mile
- Turn left onto High St.
- Continue .7 mile
- Entrance is on the left near the Highway Department building

Parking Location



Tuckerwood Conservation Area

Description

Tucked away in a quiet, residential neighborhood, Tuckerwood Conservation Area is 32 acres of wooded wetland, which for the past 50 years have remained undisturbed and secluded amidst ongoing development. Originally in private ownership, it was acquired by the City of Bridgewater in 1998. The filtering of water through this wooded terrain helps to protect the quality and availability of the town's water supply.

Points of Interest

- Hiking trail
- 2,000 feet of river frontage
- Vernal ponds that serve as habitat for the wood frog and spotted salamander

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001.)

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Tuckerwood from Bridgewater Center:

- Go north on Route 18 for 1 mile
- Turn right onto High Street and continue .9 mile through intersection with Hayward St.
- Right-of-way leading to a small parking area is on the right, with Tuckerwood Conservation Area sign.

Parking Location



Carver's Pond

Description

Most of the land in Bridgewater has been formed by a variety of glacial deposits. These include two major aquifers that underlie the entire town center in a continuous layer of fresh water. The 35-acre pond is part of the recharge area above one of those aquifers, which in turn supports five wells as part of the town water supply.

In the 19th century, before refrigeration was common, Carver's Pond was valuable for its ice. In fact, the pond was created for the purpose by connecting two glacial deposits (small hills known as kames) with a low berm. As late as the 1940s, ice houses such as McNeeland's would "farm" the pond by cutting out blocks to be sold to local homes.

Today Carver's Pond is a valuable part of water-quality protection in Bridgewater. The surrounding wetlands help to purify the surface water, which in turn contributes to good water quality in the aquifer below.

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001.)

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Carver's Pond from Bridgewater Center:

- Follow School Street past Fire Department to end
- Turn right onto Summer Street; continue .7 mile
- Parking lot and signs for Carver's Pond are on the right

Parking Location



Stiles and Hart Conservation Area

Description

The Stiles and Hart Conservation Area was once the site of the Plymouth County Agricultural Society Fair. Starting in 1819, the [fairgrounds](#) contained an exhibition hall, grandstand, cattle barn, and a racetrack. According to the trail guide compiled by Wildlands Trust through the AmeriCorps MassLift program,

“In 1895, a local teacher, William Basset, Sr., purchased the land and founded the Bridgewater Brick Company. The company mined clay and produced bricks on the site. In 1913, Stiles & Hart Brick Company purchased the operation. Due to damage to the buildings in the hurricane of 1938, brick production ceased, but clay mining continued until after World War II.” The town purchased this property in 1999 through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Self-Help Program.

Points of Interest

- Cattails in the river marsh at the eastern end of the property
- Contains swamps, vernal pools, ponds, and a small brook
- The Town River borders the property to the south and the east with over 7,000 feet of river border

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001. For more historical information, see [The Taunton River Stewardship Council's History of the Titicut Site.](#))

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Stiles & Hart Conservation Area from Bridgewater Center:

- Go north on Route 18 (Broad Street)
- After the Campus Plaza Shopping Center, the trail head is on the right immediately after the bridge over the Town River

Parking Location

Because there is no dedicated parking space, visitors can park in the Campus Plaza parking lot and walk to the trail head.



Wyman Meadow Conservation Area

Description

Bordering Wyman Meadow to the northeast, Plymouth Street used to be on the stagecoach route from Boston to Plymouth and served as a stop for fresh horses. This 55-acre site has a long agricultural history as a dairy farm, from the 1950s to the 1980s as part of Wyman Farm. In 1987, Wyman Meadow ceased operation as a dairy farm, but was used for beef cattle and hay until the Town of Bridgewater purchased the property with a self-help grant in 1999.

Points of Interest

- Over 1,750 feet of frontage along the Taunton River
- Excellent wildlife viewing opportunities, including the possibility of seeing ground-nesting birds
- Several milkweed patches, a favorite food of Monarch Butterflies, common in Massachusetts in late summer.

(Description from the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater brochure, 2001. For more historical information, see [The Taunton River Stewardship Council's History of the Titicut Site.](#))

Directions

[Google Maps Directions](#)

To reach Wyman Meadow from Bridgewater Center:

- Go north on Route 18 for 1 mile
- Turn right onto High Street
- Continue to end and stop sign (2.5 miles)
- At the stop sign, continue across Routh 104 onto Plymouth Street.
- The field is on the right, a large open meadow with a road through the center.

Parking Location

An informal parking area can be found at the beginning of the access road through the Meadow between the old sign and the gate.



Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
February 17, 2021, 7:00 pm
Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Committee Members present: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Maureen Minasian; Lauren Webb, Nicole Holmes

Members absent: Kevin Mandeville

Guests: Pat Neary, Melissa Ramondetta, Mark Peterson

Call To Order: A quorum was present. The meeting, held on Zoom, was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The draft December 17, 2021 minutes sent to committee members will be considered at the next meeting.

Public Comment: No comments were made. Guests were invited to comment on agenda items when they are discussed and did so as may be noted below.

New Business:

- **Submission of letters of support for grant applications: 1) Old State Farm Trail; 2) Stiles & Hart.** Eileen requested a vote to ratify the submission of these letters. The first was requested by Kitty Doherty, Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater, for the Old State Farm Trail; the second was requested by Steve Solbo, Environmental Planner, for State funds for Stiles & Hart. Because the January meeting was cancelled, Eileen sent drafts of the letters to committee members for their review and approval prior to submitting them by the January deadlines. Maureen moved to ratify submission of the letters; Lauren seconded. It was unanimously approved. Eileen has received another request for a support letter for the Town's application for Community Preservation Act funds for Stiles & Hart. It may be necessary to call a special meeting to get committee approval for this if the deadline is before the March 17th OSC meeting
- **Committee Annual Report.** The Committee's Annual Report was submitted to the Town Clerk. Eileen noted that Maureen suggested that our goals for 2022 should include protection of trees. This will be discussed under the Tree Committee Report agenda item.
- **Revisions to zoning ordinances.** Recodification of BW's Zoning Ordinances has been underway for a couple of years. Melissa Ramondetta has brought issues in the revisions related to open space to the attention of this committee. Eileen has attended a couple of Planning Board meetings where the revisions have been discussed and will continue to monitor the process.

Old Business

- **Wyman Meadows Town Parkland.** Eric Boyer and Mitch Hennings, of Wildlands Trust, presented a map depicting a possible trail starting at the town conservation property and extending for about one mile through the Wildland Trust's North Fork Preserve. A series of slides Mitch took during a recent walk through the North Fork area highlighted the scenic and natural resource value of the property and the general location where the trail might be developed. Weather permitting, a site visit at this site will be scheduled soon.
- **Review of website information for Town Parklands.** Lauren Webb has updated the descriptions of the 6 Town Parklands that were drafted by the NRTB 20 years ago. The descriptions are currently on the town web site but are not easy to find and out-of-date. Committee members were asked to review the drafts and submit their comments to everyone on the committee. After the descriptions are finalized, the next step will be to work with town staff to get the revised information posted at places on the town website where it will be easy for the public to locate it.

- **Lake Nippenicket Petition: *Discontinuance of the Abandoned Portion of Lakeside Drive.*** Eileen noted that at the December 15th meeting, the committee discussed the possibility that a proposal by Claremont Companies to build a restaurant on the Lake will be resubmitted. Committee members agreed that Lake Nippenicket is an important Town open space resource and our committee should review any proposals that might impact the Lake and take appropriate action. Claremont Companies has submitted a request for the town to abandon a portion of Lakeside Drive. That request is under consideration by the Town Council Community and Economic Development Subcommittee. Eileen asked if the committee wants to comment on that request. Nicole made the following motion, which was seconded by Maureen, and unanimously approved:

The Bridgewater Open Space Committee should take action, including submission of written or oral comments, for any project under review by the Town Council or other town committees, if the project is inconsistent with natural resource protection of Lake Nippenicket, an important Open Space resource.

- **Tree Committee Report.** Nicole Holmes reported that there has been no Tree Committee activity in recent months.
- **Hanson Farm update.** A meeting with the Town Manager, Community & Economic Development Director, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Preservation Committee, and Eileen Hiney was held on February 16. The purpose of the meeting was to identify a plan of action for this project identifying steps to take and responsible parties.

Next Meeting: Thursday March 17, 2022 @7:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Submitted by Eileen Hiney

For submission only if the matter is taken up again by the CED Committee or the Town Council or another Town Council subcommittee.

May XX 2022

Town Council Community and Economic Development Subcommittee:

Peter Colombotos Chairman District 5

Representative William Wood District 6 Representative

Fred Chase District 4 Representative

Subject: Proposed Ordinance D-FY22-013 – Discontinuance of the Abandoned Portion of Lakeside Drive

Dear Councilors Colombotos, Chase, and Wood:

The Bridgewater Open Space Committee (OSC) submits these comments on *Proposed Ordinance D-FY22-013 – Discontinuance of the Abandoned Portion of Lakeside Drive*, which you considered at your November 3, 2021 meeting. Your meeting minutes reflect that you identified issues of concern with this proposal, specifically:

- whether the town should seek compensation for the abandoned property;
- If the property is abandoned, will the town lose any rights to the parking lot; and
- to what extent is any part of the road still being used.

Your committee raised important questions. The OSC would like to raise broader questions that are of concern. As you know, in 2020, the Claremont Companies submitted a proposal to construct a restaurant on the residential lot adjacent to the parking lot. A public hearing was held in February 2020 and the many Bridgewater residents in attendance expressed overwhelming disapproval of this idea. Our understanding is that Claremont withdrew that proposal.

In November 2021, Claremont advised Lake Nippenicket area residents that it intends to submit another restaurant proposal. It seems reasonable to conclude that the abandonment proposal is a preliminary step towards the larger goal of a constructing a restaurant. The OSC opposes the proposed abandonment, which appears to be a step towards construction of a restaurant at this location.

The *Bridgewater 2017 Open Space Plan* identifies, among its *Goals and Objectives*, the following:

Goal 5. To protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities.

Objectives: 1. Improve water quality of rivers and other surface water bodies

The abandonment proposal, when viewed in the context of Claremont's intent to construct a restaurant, will not protect Lake Nip, an environmentally sensitive area, and will lead to degradation of its waters. Whatever requirements and restrictions might be imposed on a permitted restaurant would not eliminate the harm from construction and operation of a restaurant including, runoff, litter, noise, disruption of the shoreline, and impacts on the stream the flows into the Lake at this location.

Of great significance is the fact that Lake Nippenicket shoreline parcels are among properties included in the *Hockamock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*. The ACEC designation, which was achieved largely through the work of interested Bridgewater citizens and officials, was granted by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs in 1990. The purpose of an ACEC designation is the "long term

preservation, management, and stewardship of critical resources and ecosystems". Abandonment by the Town of the land parcel in question is not consistent with this purpose.

Finally, the Bridgewater 2017 Open Space Plan identifies a number of potential Scenic Ways including Lakeside Drive along the edge Lake Nippenicket. While these "ways" do not have additional regulatory protection based on their recognized scenic value, they nonetheless, have been recognized through the Town's planning processes as worthy of protection. A restaurant on the edge of the Lake will impede scenic views of the Lake for everyone except the restaurant patrons.

In closing, we note that Claremont claims that questions about the ownership of property in the vicinity of the parking lot are an obstacle to use of the adjacent residential lot. There does not appear to be a problem with continued use of that property for residential purposes. Rather, Claremont is asking the town to fix a "problem" that it is creating with its plans for a restaurant. We urge you to not to abandon the property as proposed by Claremont.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridgewater Open Space Committee
Eileen Hiney, Chair
Nicole Holmes
Kevin Mandeville
Maureen Minasian
Lauren Webb

CC: Michael Dutton, Jennifer Deboisbriand