

**Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
January 19, 2023
Final Meeting Minutes**

Attendance:

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

Members absent: Michael Silvia

Town Staff attending:

Rob Rulli, Community and Economic Development Director; John Hart, Chief Parklands Steward

Call To Order: A quorum was present. The meeting commenced at 7:05.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The December 15, 2022 meeting minutes will be taken up in January.

Public Comment: Members of the Lake Nippenicket Action Focus Team reported that the Claremont Companies has submitted its Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to the state MEPA Office. Comments on the DEIR are due January 23. (See agenda item below.)

Old Business:

Wyman Meadow next steps.

Owen Grey of Wildlands Trust shared a map showing the boundaries of the town and WT parcels and the location of the proposed trail, including where bog boards are needed. Owen is talking with Steve Solbo about what will be presented to the Conservation Commission for its approval. Sending a letter to adjacent property owners prior to the official notice to abutters would be a good idea.

Bridgewater State Forest visit. No report.

Letter of Support for Old State Farm Trail not submitted.

On 12/8, the Town Manager's office asked for a letter for this project; no deadline was given. The OSC agreed to send a letter at its 12/15 meeting; on 12/16, Eileen was told it was no longer needed.

Reminder: MA Open Space Network.

These 90-minute sessions will be held Thursday afternoons in February on Zoom.

New Business:

Town Chief Park Steward, John Hart.

Mr. Hart introduced himself and described his duties and activities at this newly-created town position within the Parks and Recreation Department. He works 13-hours per week and is supervised by Jim Small, Parks and Recreation Director. He is working on the trails and parking lots, and providing general maintenance, at the 6 town Parklands. This is great step forward as most of these properties have been neglected for many years.

Conservation Commission Hearing on Stiles & Hart 1/19 @ 5:30 pm.

Eileen attended this Zoom meeting. A consultant hired by the town presented maps showing proposed trails, including a fully accessible trail, and reviewed other aspects of this major open space project. Because of wetlands impacts, Conservation Committee approval was requested and it was granted.

The Town Manager has requested a letter of support from the Open Space Committee for the town's application to the Community Preservation Committee for funds to acquire 2 lots on Route 18. The lots would provide additional parking for Stiles & Hart, or if parking is not feasible, the purchase would result in further protection for the parkland and the river. Eileen will submit a letter of support.

Lake Nip Developer Response to MEPA: <http://lnaft.org/>

The developer submitted a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to MEPA on 12/22/2023 regarding its Lakeshore Development Phase 4. Comments on the DEIR must be submitted to MEPA by 1/23/2023. Members of the Lake Nippenicket Action Focus Team reported they have reviewed the lengthy (600+ pages) DEIR and they believe the developer has failed to respond to the concerns previously raised by commenters and by MEPA concerning the environmental and other impacts the proposed project would have. Eileen will review the DEIR and submit a comment letter by 1/23.

North St property adjacent to Murray-Needs conservation land update.

At the OSC 12/22 meeting, Eileen reported that 9+ acres adjacent to the Murray-Needs conservation land is listed for sale. She spoke with Michael Dutton about the potential for the town to acquire some or all of this property to protect the conservation value of Murray Needs. She has heard that an offer may have been made. Mr. Rulli offered to speak with Mr. Dutton about this.

OSC Annual Report due 1/23.

This will be submitted shortly after the due date. Eileen will send a draft to committee members for review prior to submission.

New Community and Development Department Director.

Mr. Bob Rulli has recently been hired as CED Director replacing Jennifer Deboisbriand. He introduced himself and offered helpful comments and suggestions. The OSC looks forward to working with him.

Next Meeting:

The next regular committee meeting will be Thursday, February 16, 2023.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eileen Hiney

Commented [FY1]: