

**Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
March 16, 2023
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Attendance:

Committee Members present: Eileen Hiney, Chair, Michael Silvia, Lauren Webb, Maureen Minasian

Member absent: Nicole Holmes

Town Staff attending: Bob Rulli, Community & Economic Development Director

Call To Order: A quorum was present. The meeting commenced at 7:10.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the February 16, 2023 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Old Business:

1. Wyman Meadow: Eileen asked for, and received, comments on the draft letter to abutting Plymouth St. landowners, which she sent out prior to the meeting. Possible dates for the site visit with abutters were discussed. Saturday, April 29th seems to be a date when most members of this committee could attend. Eileen will take steps to finalize the letter, but she will be away, so not until the 2nd week of April. Bob Rulli said the town can assist with identifying the abutters.

2. Bridgewater State Forest update. Eileen finally made contact with someone from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The property is discussed at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/blue-hills-complex> (sec. 12) where it designated as "Parkland." Parkland landscape designation prohibits commercial timber harvesting. Future tree cutting is restricted to supporting recreation and ameliorating public safety hazards. This committee should visit this property, and also talk with Dan Menendez, who manages the nearby BSU trails, to see if there are any opportunities to connect the State Forest with BSU trails.

3. Tree Committee – no report

4. Mass Open Space Network Conference BioMap Session. Michael Silvia listened in on the final session of this conference, which was about the state's on-line BioMap system. He reported on the extensive information available to identify and map natural resource, and other geographical features.

5. Chapter 61 Properties: This committee looked into the status of Chapter 61 properties a couple of years ago to see how many of those listed in the 2019 Open Space Plan were still in Chapter 61. Lauren Webb reviewed the then current Chapter 61 status and identified the landowners of the properties. At that time, we discussed that next steps would be to look at the properties on a map and make a determination about their open space value. We would then consider contacting landowners who might own land with open space potential. The new BioMap system should help identify the open space value of the Chapter 61 properties. Lauren and Michael will work together on how to do this and report back, possibly by the May meeting.

New Business:

1. Supreme Judicial Court decision on public meetings. Bob Rulli and Eileen commented on the recent court decision concerning the limits of permissible public comment in public meetings. The case arose from the town of Southborough which, during a public meeting, tried to limit public comments that were critical of the board conducting the hearing. The decision found the actions by the board and the policy of the town were unconstitutional.

2. New procedures for Town Committees. Josh McGraw reviewed the new procedures that the town manager discussed in an email he sent on 2/28/2023. They are designed to improve communications between committees and town staff, the public, and other committees. Josh said the communications of the OSC have been great (agendas, minutes, etc.) and he does not expect that we will need to do anything new or different to apprise town staff and others of our activities.

Additional Items:

The next regular committee meeting will be **Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 7:00 pm.**

Parks & Trails Roundtable Discussion. This 2nd Roundtable meeting will be held on 3/28/2023, 4-5 pm at the Academy Bldg. Michael Silvia will attend on behalf of the OSC

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eileen Hiney

Commented [FY1]: