

CITY OF BEVERLY

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

BOARD: Open Space and Recreation Committee
SUBCOMMITTEE:
DATE: January 6, 2021
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Charlie Mann (Chair), David Brewster (Vice Chair), David Alden-St. Pierre, Elizabeth Dunne, Wayne Miller, Marilyn McCrory, Todd Callaghan, Gregory Sharp, Alison Dudley
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenna Pirrotta, Environmental Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the public: Gary Marshall, Robert Gates, Nick S.; Change Is Simple: Patrick Belmonte
RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

1. Call to Order

Mann chairs and opens the meeting at 7:00 p.m., noting that it is a virtual meeting as allowed during the State of Emergency declared due to the national crisis of COVID-19. Mann confirms that all members are present and can hear all participants.

2. Members of the Public

a. Gary Marshall, Greens Hill proposed trail

Gary Marshall of 28 Carver Street, discusses adding a trail to the existing trail system at Greens Hill. He reports that the youth in the neighborhood would like to have other areas to explore. Alden- St. Pierre and Brewster offer comments to the urban nature of the area. Mann notes that frequent bootleg trail activity has been occurring lately. Members debate whether adding new trails in this area is warranted considering the limited space. Miller notes a loop trail would be preferable here. Members discuss the practices of the public approaching the Committee for advice, noting the public should discuss activities before initiating them. Members discuss which purview the area of the proposed trails falls under. Callaghan suggests a site walk and members agree. The Committee schedules a site walk for Sunday, January 10, 2021 to review the area.

b. Patrick Belmonte, Change Is Simple

Patrick Belmonte, Co-Director of Change Is Simple, introduces himself and explains the program. It is a multi-disciplinary program that and is a nonprofit co-founded by Belmonte and his wife. The Belmonte's are both educators and passionate about the environment, ecological sustainability, global warming, and STEM. The premise of their programming incorporates STEM into area schools, with a focus on kindergarten to grade 6. They integrate technology with real world practical applications, at zero cost to the student or the school. Students are able to have quality training and lifelong skills from the program. Belmonte reviews their staffing and partnerships with local colleges and universities. Callaghan invites Belmonte to a future Harbor Fest event, and members note possible beneficial collaboration with the Clean Energy Advisory Group and Waste Reduction Committee. The Committee is interested in hearing from Belmonte for future updates.

c. Robert Gates – Moraine Farm area

Robert Gates experienced technical difficulties and rejoins the meeting. Gates lives in the area of Moraine Farm and is before the Committee to advocate for protection of the parcel, as it's recently been listed for sale in December 2020. He emphasizes the need to protect the parcel from development and the benefit to the community. Mann discusses the property and notes the Conservation Restriction that is currently in place. The Committee agrees that the parcel should be protected and is in favor of obtaining public access. Greenbelt is expressing possible interest for the property.

3. Approval of Minutes

There are no minutes for review.

4. Principal Items of Business

a. Community Preservation Committee – Representative Report

McCrory provides updates on Community Preservation Committee (CPC) activities and notes that Wynne presented at the last CPC meeting. Denise Deschamps is confirming with the Solicitor's Office about whether a new MOU is needed for the Green's Hill trail project, since it has expired. Full applications for next round of funding are due January 12, 2021. Currently there is \$720,000 in the open space fund account. The Tanzella Hill parcel owner inquired about the application process. It was noted that a conservation partner would be needed and the correct process was described to the owner.

b. Planning Board – Representative Report

Miller provides updates regarding Planning Board activities and the City Master Plan. He notes that there are currently no items before the Planning Board that affect open space. The Master Plan final review and approval is before City Council and should be signed off at their next meeting. Miller reports a lot of support in preserving open spaces from the public and several other committees who provided input on the Master Plan. Miller also reported the plan addresses the affordable housing crisis and the need to create additional housing without removing trees or negatively affecting open space.

c. Conservation Commission – Representative Report

Pirrotta notes that the property at 38 Standley Street is before the Conservation Commission for the approval of delineated wetland boundaries. This is required in advance of a proposed subdivision, through the Open Space Residential Design process. Alden- St. Pierre is a newly confirmed member of the Conservation Commission and will provide the relevant updates. Members review the map and discuss the impact on the area and connecting trails if new development occurs on that property. Pirrotta notes that no proposed work at the property is currently before the Conservation Commission, but that the delineation would inform where potential development could occur.

d. Harbor Management Authority Updates – Representative Report

Callaghan reports that HMA is working with a French company to add sensors to boats that would collect data from the boats using Wi-Fi technology. This is a pilot program which would be beneficial to waterfront sustainability and preservation. Potential applications would also facilitate boat slip rentals by identifying when slips are predicted to be vacant.

e. Parcel Updates

i. Green Street update

This topic was addressed in CPC updates. Mann notes that Greenbelt has offered to assist with project management and coordination with the property owner.

ii. Norwood Pond update

Alden- St. Pierre inquires about an update on the trail easement at the back of the property. Pirrotta will follow up with the Mayor's office about rescheduling the meeting between Bill Haney and the Mayor.

iii. Simon Street & Beckford Street parcels

Dudley inquires about the creation of potential pocket parks at vacant lots in the area of Simon and Beckford Streets. Mann notes he visited the properties. Members review a map of the properties and discusses the value of creating parks in the area. Dudley notes that parks would be a positive addition to the area, to increase open space and provide green space for the neighborhood children. Mann notes it may not be practical for a pocket park on an expensive buildable lot. McCrory and Miller offer comments that any open space is valuable. Dudley will follow up with the owner, Beverly Housing Authority, to determine if there are any future plans for development of the vacant lots. Dunne suggests the need for building neighborhood interest. Callaghan notes that this may be an opportunity to involve Change is Simple to assist with underserved neighborhood children.

iv. Ryal Side Parcels

Pirrotta reports that a property owner approached the Planning Department with a possible donation of several parcels in Ryal Side. Members discuss opportunities for connective trails and increased open space preservation. The parcels are shown on City GIS as mostly wetlands, with little potential for development. Callaghan inquires if these parcels are better protected by the City or in private property hands. Members discuss scheduling a site visit for a time after the next meeting. Pirrotta will inquire with the owner about permission to walk the property.

5. Other Business

a. Master Plan update

Miller previously discussed Master Plan updates earlier in the meeting.

b. Trail Discussion

Mann discusses an issue at Beverly Commons of excess water along the trail route where Wood Road meets Route 128. The existing trail runs through a low spot that is wet year-round. Mann

suggests that the trail be re-routed to an area out of the mud. The Committee reviews the area and discusses the best way to re-route the trail. Dunne notes that the abandoned portion of trail should be blocked off to prevent access so that the area will be restored. Members concur this is a practical solution.

Miller moves to relocate the trail to higher ground as discussed. Alden- St. Pierre seconds. The motion carries 9-0.

The Committee notes there is not enough time to prepare a submittal before for this year's application deadline for the MassTrails Grants Program. Members consider preparing materials or ideas for projects in advance to be prepared for when future funding opportunities arise.

6. Future Agenda Items

The Committee discusses inviting the City Solicitor to a future meeting to discuss the encroachment policy, and also inviting the City Grants Director to discuss assistance with grants.

7. Adjournment

Miller moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. McCrory seconds. The motion carries 9-0.

Next Meeting: February 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.