

CITY OF BEVERLY

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

BOARD: Open Space and Recreation Committee
SUBCOMMITTEE:
DATE: February 3, 2021
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Charlie Mann (Chair), David Brewster (Vice Chair), David Alden-St. Pierre, Todd Callaghan, Elizabeth Dunne, Marilyn McCrory, Wayne Miller, Gregory Sharp (joins the meeting at 7:50 p.m.)
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Alison Dudley
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenna Pirrotta, Environmental Planner; Chelsea Zakas, Associate Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the public: Gary Marshall; Catherine Barrett, City of Beverly Grants Director
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 members that are present and that they can hear all participants.

2. Members of the Public

a. Gary Marshall, Greens Hill proposed trail

Gary Marshall of 28 Carver Street, returns to the Committee continuing the discussion of adding a trail to the existing trail system at Greens Hill. Members offer suggestions and recap their site walk on January 10, 2021. Marshall and the Committee discuss the trail location and specifics, noting that sensitive resources are avoided. Members note that the trail seems appropriate and compatible with multiple trail users. Callaghan suggests drafting a letter notifying the land owner of Marshall overseeing the use of new trails under certain conditions. Mann believes the land ownership is under the City of Beverly. Pirrotta will confirm which entity the land belongs to, noting it does not appear to fall under Conservation Commission purview.

Alden- St. Pierre moves to recommend the approval of the new trail and to send a letter to the appropriate City department for final approval. Callaghan seconds. The motion carries 7-0.

Callaghan inquires if the document Alden- St. Pierre drafted of appropriate trail cutting activities is suitable to forward to Marshall as an operations guide. Pirrotta advises that the document be reviewed first before sending as best practices. Alden- St. Pierre discusses the draft document and clarifies its intent to the Committee. Callaghan suggests once the trails are complete that Marshall have someone upload the trails to GIS.

3. Approval of Minutes

The Committee moves on to the review and approval of minutes, while Barrett addresses technical difficulties and rejoins the meeting.

McCrorry moves to approve the December 2, 2020 minutes as amended. Alden-St. Pierre seconds. The motion carries 7-0.

Callaghan moves to approve the January 6, 2021 minutes as amended. McCrorry seconds. The motion carries 7-0.

2. Members of the public opportunity to address the Committee (cont.)

b. Catherine Barrett, City of Beverly Grants Director
Mann welcomes Barrett to the meeting. Barrett introduces herself, briefly describes her background, and discusses her involvement with grant applications, noting that she frequently works with the Planning Department. She notes that she previously assisted Wynne with the Committee's MassTrails grant for the kiosk signage. Mann inquires if Barrett has a tracking system for available grants. Barrett keeps a list by priorities per each department or board/commission. Barrett researches available funding and requirements, including grants with matches. Barrett notes she is happy to assist the Committee with upcoming grant proposals. Mann inquires if the list of available grants can be shared, specific to open space informing Barrett they are interested in the MassTrails grant. The Committee will not make the application deadline for 2021 and would like assistance for 2022.

Discussion continues on to state and federal grant opportunities, their competitive nature and the prior federal administration's funding practices. Mann inquires if the Healthy Communities Program has any trail grants; Mann explains the program. Barrett recalls the City may have previously applied to the grant via the Council on Aging. Members thank Barrett for her time and plan to coordinate with enough advance planning for future grant opportunities.

4. Principal Items of Business

a. Community Preservation Committee – Representative Report

Members make inquiries to the Cabot Parcel and discuss possible grants for purchasing the parcel. Mann reviews the parcel particulars, noting public access is key with interest in the parcel eventually becoming a reservation. Mann reviews the Cabot Parcel in detail and familiarizes Barrett on the history and future prospects, as it relates to possible Community Preservation Act funding. McCrorry notes that an out of cycle application could be submitted for funding. The Committee again emphasizes the public value of the property.

b. Planning Board – Representative Report

Miller reports there are no updates at this time.

c. Harbor Management Authority Updates – Representative Report

Callaghan notes that the Harbor Management Authority (HMA) would like to develop a park at the end of Congress Street and clean up the area and would be seeking CPA funds. HMA is coordinating with CPC, the City Solicitor, and Planning Director. There were previous questions on ownership of the area, but review of old city records and documents show that the City owns the space. Per McCrorry, from a prior CPC meeting, the CPA requirements are that the land be

permanently dedicated to recreation purposes and be permanently protected. McCrory notes the CPC is an enthusiastic partner to the HMA ensuring this area is revitalized and protected. Callaghan also noted HMA has funds and is willing to partner with OSRC to accomplish common goals. He mentions the project coordination between HMA and OSRC for sign installation along the waterfront. Sharp joins the meeting.

Callaghan provides an update on the recently approved boat sensor pilot program from an innovative French technology company. Callaghan clarifies the intent of the technology is to provide direct feedback to the boat owners, such as where their craft is and how it's doing, for example whether the boat is listing, taking on water, if it's damp, on fire, vandalized, etc. The information is relayed by an app to the vessel owner and the Harbormaster. The company will analyze the data and provide analytics to the City.

d. Conservation Commission – Representative Report

Alden- St. Pierre reports there are no updates related to OSRC interests at this time.

e. Parcel Updates

i. Ryal Side Parcels

Pirrotta notes a property owner reached out about possible land donation of several parcels in Ryal Side. Most of the parcels were created through a 1960s subdivision and GIS mapping shows the parcels are predominantly wetlands. The larger of the parcels is adjacent to a recent parcel acquisition through the Open Space and Residential Design process. The current property owner would like to offer the parcels to the City, but the City benefit is not yet clear since the parcels could be unbuildable. Pirrotta confirms the owner's representative provided permission for Committee members and City representatives to enter the parcels. Brewster encourages the members to walk through the area. Brewster notes the neighborhood has little remaining open space and having natural open space could be a value to the community. Alden- St. Pierre notes there could be stewardship concerns about dumping or encroachments. Members note that if the land is already protected because it is considered unbuildable, there may be little value gained by transferring it under City ownership. Brewster and Dunne discuss the potential for wildlife habitat preservation. Brewster notes he observed a well-used trail in the area that may be used by neighborhood dog walkers. Members will individually review the property on their own before the next meeting. The Committee expects to discuss suitability of the parcels at the next meeting.

ii. Temi Road Parcel

Pirrotta provides describes another parcel where the current owner reached out to the Planning Department about donating to the city. The property is off of Temi Road and would connect to existing City property behind Robinson Road. The property is in the Centerville neighborhood, near the Wenham border. It appears to be mostly wetlands. Members discuss access points and the surrounding areas and initially agree this would be worth adding to the existing area of preservation. Permission was granted by the owner to enter the property and members will view the property on their own before the next meeting.

iii. Green Street update

27 X – Pirrotta confirms there are no updates. 27A – Mann notes that Chris LaPointe of Greenbelt has reached out the Mayor’s Office about offering assistance with coordinating with the property owner.

iv. Bass Haven update

Mann confirms with Pirrotta there are no updates to report. The item was last left with the Mayor’s Office to follow up with Denise Deschamps. Miller will follow up with Mayor Cahill.

v. Simon Street & Beckford Street parcels

Dudley had previously inquired about vacant lots on Simon Street and Beckford Street and potential for use as community green space. Dudley intended to reach out to Beverly Housing Authority about the future use of the parcels and report any updates to the Committee.

vi. Endicott College trail

Per Pirrotta there are no updates at this time. McCrory inquires about the options presented to the Endicott Board what information is needed. Pirrotta refreshes the Committee on what was previously submitted on the proposed easement locations. Mann and Pirrotta discuss reaching out to Endicott College to make sure they have enough information.

vii. Pole Swamp

There are no updates at this time.

viii. Encroachments

Mann asks about a response from the Solicitor’s Office regarding encroachment letters submitted to them by OSRC. There are several known encroachments onto City property. Pirrotta notes that the Encroachment Protocol was not formally adopted, but that OSRC could use the log book to track the information. Additionally, the Solicitor’s Office recently noted that if anyone has current inventory of private parcels with access easements, to please send to them. Members loosely discuss maintaining such a list.

5. Trail Discussion

a. Trail Guidance

The Committee discusses having trail guidance in place, possibly with a Notice of Intent filing before the Conservation Commission so that certain activities are essentially approved in advance for when volunteers or others are available for needed trail maintenance, the review is expedited. Alden- St. Pierre asks about the level of detail needed. Pirrotta suggested having initial discussions with the Conservation Commission about what activities are considered to be minimal impact. Mann suggested that the process should be simple to follow and encourage its use to dissuade people from doing maintenance or trail creation on their own. Callaghan notes the graphic provided by Alden- St. Pierre on pruning is very helpful.

b. Outreach

Alden – St. Pierre notes he continues to post on Facebook and Instagram when he can. Some members of the public have reached out in response to the posted signs and Pirrotta has been sharing meeting access information to interested citizens. Mann asks about Alden- St. Pierre’s contact with the developer of the Trail Care app. Alden- St. Pierre describes that the app allows

the public to report real time issues as they are on the trails. Examples include information on specific locations of fallen trees, washouts, etc. by dropping a pin and notifying appropriate parties to address it. Callaghan notes that someone told him about the app and utility that same evening. Mann agrees it would be a good idea to hear from the developer.

6. Other Business

a. OSR Plan updates

Zakas introduced herself at the beginning of the meeting and noted that she will be assisting with the Open Space and Recreation Plan update. The current plan goes until August 2022. Pirrotta will keep this as a standing agenda item moving forward.

b. Committee Chair/Vice Chair Election

Mann encourages members to consider rotating chairmanship and. Mann wants to remain on the Committee, but encourages a change up in the position. The topic is tabled for further discussion.

c. Other

McCrary notes that at a recent CPC meeting, Bryant Ayles raised concerns on where bond payments come from regarding Camp Paradise. Ayles notes that the payment may need to come from the Open Space reserve and not the General Reserve. Ayles is checking on this.

The OSRC brings up past discussion of possible trail near Harry Ball Field and that an adjacent property was recently listed for sale. Members note there is an 11 acre land-locked property that would be great for future preservation. It is adjacent to Greenbelt property. Members discuss potential consideration as a priority property. The property is currently vacant.

7. Future Agenda Items

Adam Glick of the Trail Care app, as discussed above, will be invited to a future meeting.

8. Adjournment

Alden- St. Pierre moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Callaghan seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

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