

CITY OF BEVERLY

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

BOARD: Open Space and Recreation Committee
SUBCOMMITTEE:
DATE: May 5, 2021
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: David Alden-St. Pierre (Chair), David Brewster (Vice Chair), Alison Dudley, Elizabeth Dunne, Wayne Miller, Marilyn McCrory, Todd Callaghan, Gregory Sharp
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Charlie Mann
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenna Pirrotta, Environmental Planner; Chelsea Zakas, Associate Planner
OTHERS PRESENT:
RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

1. Call to Order

Alden chairs and opens the meeting at 7:06 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. Alden confirms that all members who affirmed are present and can hear all participants.

2. Meeting Composition

a. Duration and Agenda Arrangement

Alden begins discussion with the meeting duration and time limits. Callaghan and Dudley agree a hard stop at 9 p.m. would be preferable. Dudley suggests time limits for public presentations. Alden inquires what would be the best way to have efficient public presentations without too much time consumption. Members agree the value of public input is important with Miller suggesting 8-minute presentations. Callaghan offers that agenda items be moderated in order to move forward through each item efficiently. Sharp suggests 90-minute meetings, with McCrory countering to have moderated time segments per agenda item. Dunne proposes on the occasion where a public issue takes up more time the regular business meeting items amended to accommodate the public concerns. Brewster suggests combining McCrory's and Miller's ideas. The time moderation of agenda items and public presentations are kept to an 8:4 ratio; 8-minute speak; 4-minute Q&A.

Alden moves onto agenda arrangement. Dudley suggests brief summaries and selective focus on the other committee's minutes. Callaghan acknowledges this is an issue for other committees as they often have intersecting interests and concerns. It is difficult when the details are bogged down with other committee's minutes. Dudley would like to focus on the intersection of OSRC and other committee's pertinent information. McCrory points out there are designated representatives to other committees which is why there are crossover discussions.

There being no further comments or concerns. No action required at this time.

b. Open Meeting Law requirements and questions

Members do not have much to offer for comments. Pirrotta points out all members have the ability to receive training every two years.

There being no further comments or concerns. No action required at this time.

3. Members of the Public Opportunity to Address the Committee

Dunne brings forth a neighborhood concern near Pride's Crossing and adjacent vernal pools. The public member(s) who were supposed to be present were not available. After speaking with the neighbors, they would like use of a boardwalk to keep the grass from being destroyed by the constant travel in the muddy area. Miller suggests large stones for the public to traverse. Miller does not believe any trail rerouting would work. It is too wide and too popular an area. Dunne does not want to block an emergency vehicle. Miller clarifies the stones would be flat. Dunne inquires how bike riders would get through, Miller counters that a high percentage of riders go right on through the area. McCrory inquires if a board walk, or whatever plan suggested, may need Conservation Commission approval. Dunne suggests trail grants might be able to help. Members agree the discussion will be ongoing.

There being no further comments or concerns. No action required at this time.

4. Approval of Minutes

Sharp moves to approve the April 7, 2021 minutes as amended. Callaghan seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

5. Open Space and Recreation Plan Updates

Zakas provides the updates and reviews the materials. Reminds members the plan update is due August 2022. Division of Conservation Services (DCS) suggests one year to update the plan. They provide a detailed workbook and plan list. Zakas goes over the documents, specifically the checklist. She focuses on the sections that may need revision first. Sharp looks for clarity on comparing the changes between 2016 through present day. Zakas will look further into those changes. Dudley, what is "EJ" stand for? Zakas replies, environmental justice focuses on areas where minority and low-income communities are impacted by lack of open spaces, pollution, etc. The EJ information gathered uses census data with environmental characteristics that involves extended outreach to those communities. Miller informs the group that the Master Plan data is available to use as well.

Members discuss and review past efforts from former committees. Members discuss assigning sections; public engagement and participation; the process timeline; and coordinating efforts with the new GIS director. Miller suggests involving the mayor with these efforts. Alden asks how Zakas envisions the direction of the project. Alden asks if a subcommittee is necessary. Pirrotta and Zakas review the subcommittee meeting requirements and formation rules. Sharp confirms the subcommittees are subject to quorums. Miller confirms with the mayor the potential subcommittee would need to be fully posted and mimic all the regulations for regular

committees. Dunne suggests reviewing the minutes from 2016 as starting point. Sharp asked Zakas to summarize the minutes by what she finds.

Members discuss the best way to tackle the project in the background while balancing their other commitments. Callaghan offers to coordinate further with Chelsea on the initiative as he's currently spearheading a similar initiative for the state's ocean plan. Zakas will return with an updated plan of action.

There being no further comments or concerns. No action required at this time.

6. Principal Items of Business

a. Community Preservation Committee – Representative Report

McCrory provides the updates for the joint meeting with City Council. McCrory summarizes joint meeting with members chiming in. All confirm the community needs are great with minimal funds available to meet those needs, yet all are impressed at the dedication and care of those who participated in the meeting.

b. Planning Board – Representative Report

Miller reports there are no updates at this time. The Waring School was narrowly denied their OSRD with a 4-5 vote.

c. Harbor Management Authority Updates – Representative Report

Callaghan provides the updates. He is the lead for new signs in the coastal area. The Lothrop Street and Goat Hill area have the new signs installed. The signs detail the activities per the area. The HMA voted to approve of a pair of binoculars at Independence Park. Callaghan says the city looking to apply for a coastal pollutant grant to clean up the area at the end of Congress Street. The city was advised to look at multiple locations beyond Congress Street in order to have a successful grant. Sharp looks for more background on Congress Street activities. Callaghan provides the history on city attempts to apply for CPC funding to clear up the area.

d. Conservation Commission – Representative Report

Alden provides the updates. Dunham Ridge finally filed a noticed of intent to create a bridge connecting the properties. Pirrotta informs members there is a public hearing Wednesday May 13, 2021 at 7 p.m. for the Waring School Encroachment. Members confirm their participation and quorum requirements for a joint meeting.

e. Parcel Updates

i. Green Street update

27 X – Pirrotta confirms there are no updates at this time.

27A – Pirrotta confirms there are no updates at this time.

ii. Project Adventure update

Miller inquires what the updates are. Pirrotta confirms there are no new updates at this time. Members discuss pricing.

iii. Bass Haven update

There are no updates to report at this time.

iv. Beckford/Simon Street park

McCrary inquires with Dudley about the public park efforts. The Beverly Housing Authority is not in a position to pursue this effort. The property will be sold, but the timing of the sale is not available at this time. McCrary asks if the city would have any interest in purchasing the parcels. Dudley said past efforts by the prior BHA administrator were unsuccessful to have the city buy the parcels. Callaghan asks what the local residents feel about the area. Dudley informs the committee of the neighborhood's effort for Earth Day and their sentiments for creating a clean public space. Callaghan recommends Dudley have a petition of signatures. Alden inquires if this qualifies as an environmental justice area. Zakas will return with research for Alden. Dudley will survey the area to determine if she can get petitions noting this is a great area to pursue environmental justice.

v. Norwood Pond update

There are no updates at this time.

vi. Endicott college trail

There are no updates at this time.

vii. Pole Swamp

There are no updates at this time.

viii. Ryal Side Parcels

There are no updates at this time.

ix. Temi Parcel along Robinson Road

There are no updates at this time.

x. Tanzella Hill

There are not updates at this time.

7. Trails & Open Space Discussion

a. Trail Safety

Alden informs the committee there was another tragedy at Willowdale. He's corresponded with physician and emergency groups in Beverly. Based off these discussions there is support and potential funding for where maybe additional signage would be useful for trail safety. Callaghan inquires if the support from these groups in writing would be useful to propel their need for additional funding as part of trail safety concerns. Alden segues asking the members if there is need for a subcommittee for trail safety.

b. Trail Guidance

Alden discusses with the members creating a document guide. A draft document was sent out a while ago. The document goal is to be detailed, but not overly burdensome. Members weigh in with thoughts and opinions. Members suggest posting the document online to attract public involvement and engagement. Members discuss similar ideas for a document of invasive species. The document would outline who is responsible to maintain the area (property owners); removal and trim; etc. Members are enthusiastic about assisting the public with their trail concerns and open space awareness.

c. Community Outreach

Alden inquires with Pirrotta about the funding for the senior's nature walk with the Beverly Council on Aging. Funding was supplemented and secured through the Beverly Hospital. Members discuss and agree this event deserves future sponsorship.

Miller informs the members of a new state law for mosquito spray of heavily affected areas. Per the law, all cities are automatically opted into mosquito spray mitigation. It is also noted, even if a city opts out, they are automatically opted back in the following year. Miller does not recall the law in full, but directs members to review Mass general law 252. Miller provides updates on the meetings he's attended regarding the new law. Miller and other prominent members within the city agree the city or any community should not be opted into the law without any say. Especially since the chemicals are controversial and toxic at best. Miller is scheduled to meet Friday May 7, 2021 with Bill Burk, Department of Health Director; Mike Collins, City Engineer; and the mayor to further discuss the law. There is a tight timeline to opt out. The city application to opt out is due by May 15th. McCrory inquires if involvement from the state representative for a delay of effect would be helpful. Members agree the city should opt out and would like a letter of support drafted. Pirrotta will draft the letter.

There being no further comments or concerns.

Sharp moves to draft a letter supporting the city opt out any mosquito or pesticide sprays for the 2021 year. Callaghan seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

Hyperlinks viewed:

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/assets/media/documents/mosquito/documents/citizensHealthEffectsMosqP.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/west-nile-virus-massachusetts-public-drinking-water-systems>

<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/partiii/titleiv/chapter252>

8. Other Business

a. Future Agenda Items

No updates at this time.

9. Adjournment

Callaghan moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Sharp seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

Next Meeting: June 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.