

CITY OF BEVERLY

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

BOARD: Open Space and Recreation Committee
SUBCOMMITTEE:
DATE: June 2, 2021
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: David Alden-St. Pierre (Chair), David Brewster (Vice Chair), Alison Dudley, Elizabeth Dunne, Charlie Mann, Wayne Miller, Marilyn McCrory, Gregory Sharp
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Todd Callaghan
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenna Pirrotta, Environmental Planner; Chelsea Zakas, Associate Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: Margaret Griffin
RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

1. Call to Order

Alden chairs and opens the meeting at 7:03 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. Members of the Public Opportunity to Address the Committee

Margaret Griffin brings attention to missing trail markers in the Beverly Commons. Mann asks Griffin to please email a list of missing numbers along the trail. Griffin is upset the markers are missing and would like to see some action regarding the missing numbers. Alden notes it is the goal to make sure all trails are open and accessible for citizens. Griffin brings up safety concerns. Pirrotta will coordinate with Griffin further.

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

3. Approval of Minutes

McCrory moves to approve the May 5, 2021 minutes as amended. Brewster seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

4. Open Space and Recreation Plan Updates

Zakas provides information to members using prior meeting minutes to get a sense of the timeline. Zakas will be doing the majority of content and section updating. Zakas will coordinate across other departments for infrastructure updates. The biggest role of the members and the public is to establish the overarching goals and priorities of the plan. Zakas suggests dividing the workload by ward. Public comment and input will be incorporated. Zakas will review the data collected by the Master Plan process and have a draft survey as an initial public engagement step. Zakas would like the extended outreach to have more than one opportunity for the public to participate, this includes going door to door, events in the open spaces and parks, etc. Members agree and believe going to the public would be more effective than having the public attend the

OSRC meetings. McCrory agrees and brings forth other opportunities for members to reach the public at events like Lobster Fest and farmer's markets, or the ward civic engagement committees. Zakas is hopeful to use the updated 2020 census data. 2016 plan summary section is broken down by ward. Members recall they canvassed their specific wards to determine the needs of the open spaces and parks in those areas.

Alden asks about what specific next steps are. Zakas said survey first, between opportunities to spread the word and distribute the survey to organizations and communities; schedule a public meeting; keeping the survey open for increased public participation, and extended outreach to environmental justice communities. Alden inquires if the members can begin working on a list of accomplishments. Alden suggests starting this list would help begin the process.

Dudley asks if there is any funding for the environmental justice neighborhoods. Per Zakas the extended outreach is because these communities have historically been left out of the process. Dudley looking for a way to frame to the community that these areas matter and have needs. Mann believes this is a fantastic outreach opportunity. A step in the right direction to involve underserved communities and gain their trust. Going to the people is very important. Alden concurs and believes everyone should have the opportunity to be outside and enjoy green spaces, no matter where they live in Beverly.

Zakas recaps, next steps for her are a draft of the survey and review data from the Master Plan. Those two components combined should be enough to craft information. Zakas circles back to the list of accomplishments and believes that's a great idea and a good starting point for the members, as well as a good connecting point to begin coordinating with other departments. Miller inquires about the process for members to coordinate with other boards. Miller believes their input is important to help fill in data points. Miller and Zakas discuss coordinating efforts between the different boards and committees. Pirrotta suggests an email list in order to get additional and targeted feedback from the other boards and committees.

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

5. Principal Items of Business

a. Community Preservation Committee – Representative Report

McCrory provides the updates. Inquired if members had an opportunity to review the open space segment of the CPC plan. This plan will be updated. McCrory draws attention to the third page for special consideration. Are there any funding or projects members would like the CPC plan to flag for attention? Alden suggests the environmental justice areas that Dudley is championing. McCrory explains how the CPC funding would be applied per the OSRC priorities. Alden suggests being more generalized as oppose to specific in order to leave open opportunities not thought of. Dudley is coordinating with Ward Councilor Ames on updating the parks and playground equipment, add lighting, and make the existing spaces safer. They will pursue grant funding and CPC funding. McCrory said there is a recreation segment under the plan and the environmental justice park would be considered a priority. McCrory would communicate the need to the CPC.

Alden inquires about specific projects already in play to consider. McCrory briefly discusses Morrain Farm as an example. The mayor is in contact with someone from Trustees. Per Mann, they are at an impasse on price but still in talks.

Sharp asks about what the committee thinks about some of the specifics included on the plan. McCrory mentioned some of those specifics are probably from the Open Space and Recreation Plan. McCrory offers to edit some of the specifics and make them more general. Some of the priorities listed are to acquire adjacent protected lands, create a continuous network of trails, access to water front, increasing park areas in Beverly, etc. Dudley suggests adding a specific priority to work with environmental justice communities. Schools are looking for more outdoor spaces for youth, especially after the pandemic. McCrory asks Dudley to craft a request for outdoor spaces specific to schools with post pandemic studies. Some of the overarching goals will change, and evolve as appropriate.

b. Planning Board – Representative Report

Per Miller, there are no major updates. Miller sidebars into green initiatives. He suggests on showcasing the different green initiatives at different outreach opportunities, one in the near future at Beverly Farms. Mann asks if there's any coordination at the McPherson park and the solar panels next to the park. Alden discusses the layout of panels. They are elevated with minimal extension over the grass.

c. Harbor Management Authority Updates – Representative Report

No updates at this time.

d. Conservation Commission – Representative Report

Alden provides the update. The Waring School land swap did not go through. The city retains ownership of the field. Mann inquires if the mayor intends to move the forward process of removing the Ch 97 protection. Is there any intention of asking Waring to vacate the field? Pirrotta does not have any information on either question. Members agree it is important to have Waring vacate the field. Dunne inquires if Waring were able to play on one short field if that may sway the ConsCom. If the school backed up the soccer field, cut off the piece they do not own, play on a non-regulation field for about a year. Would that be meaningful to anyone and possibly sway anyone's mind. McCrory believes that would show good faith effort. Members are upset at the violation of the trust. That is protected land. Members discuss further and digress. Mann moves on to request a determination of applicability for the bridge. Mann think it makes sense to have the city build their own bridge on their own land for trail connectivity.

Mann moves to write a letter from the OSRC to the Planning Depart that would request an RDA be submitted and funding obtained to build the bridge on city property, moving the trails off Waring property onto Beverly property. Dudley seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

Mann will draft the letter.

e. Parcel Updates

i. Green Street update

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

27A – Zakas provides the updates. The mayor has a scheduled meeting with Greenbelt to discuss the parcel.

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

Dudley provides the updates. Dudley approached community members inquiring if they want the city to purchase the property from the Beverly Housing Authority (BHA). The overwhelming response from neighbors was yes, they would appreciate the spaces maintained. Current open space in the area is limited. BHA would put the properties out to bid and seek out a developer. McCrory asks if the BHA is a willing seller. Dudley informs the members a BHA representative approached the city in the past. The city was not interested at the time to purchase the properties. McCrory asks, would the city be interested now. Dudley tells members a BHA representative will reach out when they put the property on the market. McCrory mentions CPC funding is possible. It would be a process to appraise the property and ask the city to agree to purchase the parcel. A conversation with the planning department and the mayor is needed as well as a price point for the property. Dudley replies the BHA is in the process of obtaining the appraisal. Mann agrees neighborhoods like that need more open space. Mann has concerns over competing priorities with CPC funding, and how affordable housing needs compete with open space. Dudley mentions BHA will simply sell for housing, not necessarily for affordable housing. Current sentiment reflects the neighbors do not want any housing as the area is congested. McCrory informs the members the BHA is independent of the city with their own source of funding. Alden suggests looking at other sources of grants and funding to supplement CPA funding for a project like this. McCrory mentions there is a July application deadline for additional funding, through the state.

Dudley moves to have the committee write a letter in favor the city exploring the acquisition of the BHA properties for open space. Dunne seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

Alden will draft the letter.

v. Norwood Pond update

There are no updates at this time.

vi. Endicott college trail

Mann brings up the Endicott easement and his meeting with Rick Gagnon discussing the trails. Mann reviews the trail map, and asked for more specificity and definition on the lower trail. Pirrotta mentions the trails are described as low, medium, and high. Miller does not recall seeing this mapped anywhere. Mann is happy to draw the map, Pirrotta will coordinate with Mann and Miller to confirm the trails.

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.

6. Trails & Open Space Discussion

a. Trail Safety

Subcommittee to come up with a plan for assigning trail numbers. Alden will put the members in contact with the Beverly Fire Department (BFD) to coordinate efforts. Miller will spearhead the initiative.

b. Trail Guidance

Alden briefly discusses the document.

c. Community Outreach

There are no updates at this time.

7. Other Business

a. Meeting links

Mann asks for the hyperlink to be sent in an email with the other materials. The posted agenda does not contain a hyperlink since it is a scanned copy. Miller informed the committee the hyperlink posted on the city website calendar of meetings is not correct. The link in the posted and stamped agenda is correct. Zakas will review both postings.

Pirrotta and Zakas provide updates on the open meeting laws potential amendments to maintain virtual meeting options for the future. In lieu of covid the open meeting laws are under scrutiny for modernization. Updates are expected to roll out June 15, 2021. Zakas will keep members informed.

b. Geo-caching

Zakas provides and update on geo caching guideline document. The apps are now requesting permission from landowners to place a cache on their property. Zakas said the guidelines are meant to place consideration on where the cache is located; not in a historically, culturally, or ecologically protected area where anything would be disturbed. The application guidelines would assist and let people know where it is appropriate to place caches. Alden and Dunne recall a prior meeting where the geo cache representatives brought forth their policies and a presentation of their intentions. Pirrotta does not see any obstruction by ConsCom and the city solicitor. Zakas

will probably edit the document to say guidelines and not policy. OSRC and ConsCom reviewed the document. After the edits next step would be to have the solicitor review for any legal issues.

c. Formal announcement

Zakas formally states she is staffing the meetings. Members enthusiastically welcome Zakas.

8. Adjournment

Mann moves to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Dudley seconds. The motion carries 8-0.

Next Meeting: July 7, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.