

Approved 5/7/2020.

**Town of Harvard
Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2020**

Attendees: Rich Maiore (BOS), Peter Dorward (ConCom), Jim Lee (HCT), Jarrett Rushmore (Planning Board), Linda Dwight (School), Jo-Anne Crystoff (member at large), Paul Cohen (HAA)

Also attending: Chris Ryan (Town Planner), Doug Thornton (for Park & Rec), Paul Trevor (for Ag Committee), Dan Daly (Athletic Fields subcommittee)

Next Meeting: **Thursday, 3/26/20 7-8 AM.** Location *tbd*.

Dorward called the meeting to order.

The minutes of 1/29/20 were approved with the correction of typos.

The majority of those in attendance felt the morning meeting was the best option so that Town employees can attend. It was also decided to move the meeting to the last Thursday of the month as some Town employees do not work on Fridays.

As the appointed representatives for Park & Rec and the Ag committee will be unable to attend the OSC meetings, the members of those committees in attendance agreed to recommend replacements at the next OSC meeting.

Paul Cohen was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

Dorward called attention to the upcoming Massachusetts Open Space Conference on 4/25/20 in Greenfield.

OSC Goals for 2020

Dorward shared his attempt to triage the SB's charge to the OSC into 3 buckets – ongoing activities, needed to develop for 2020, and future work. The first bucket will be those activities that happen in response to triggers (e.g., the Town receiving a Chapter 61 withdrawal notice). The second bucket is what the committee should focus on in the coming months. The last bucket is things that were deemed less urgent, and can be tabled for later. This division of the SB's charge was thought to be a good start by the committee.

The Develop for 2020 bucket which - will be the focus of the OSC - is:

- Using the 2016 Open Space and Recreation {Master} Plan (“Plan”) as a starting point, develop a process for prioritizing lands for open space preservation and recreational needs based on current and anticipated future demand.
- Develop a capital improvement plan for the protection and development of open space and recreation.
- Present a semi- annual report at a duly convened Select Board meeting.

One of the items in “future work” is “participate in periodic updates to 2016 Master Plan”. Ryan said he will review what is needed with Liz Allard.

Athletic Fields Subcommittee

Dan Daly shared the update he presented to the SB on 11/19/19. The sense of the OSC was that the data the Athletic Fields subcommittee was collecting would ultimately create the needs analysis needed to drive open space acquisition for active recreation. Daly however stressed that they do not yet have the data necessary to adequately determine whether more fields are required.

ConCom Request for 35 Ayer Road

ConCom requested that the OSC recommend whether there is interest in the Town acquiring the land and structures on 35 Ayer Road. This was prompted by a letter from the Hazels who own the property, and have indicated they are placing it on the market.

Dorward indicated this was a good example of why evaluation tools were needed when assessing potential acquisitions. However, as the committee has not yet agreed on those tools, and a timely response is needed, the committee would have to make a judgment call.

As open space, Dorward suggested that the parcel did not meet many of the criteria which are likely to be included in evaluating open space for acquisition. These include criteria contained in the 2016 OSRP and also used by HCT, such as – connectivity, view sheds, protecting wetlands, and wildlife corridors.

There was some interest in the parcel for potential playing fields. For recreation, desirable aspects were discussed such as adequate size for playing field(s) and parking, accessibility, level topography, absence of wetlands, and absence of buildings. It was noted that the lot is sloped, has wetlands, and has a dwelling and out buildings. However it would be readily accessible. Dwight, Cohen and Thornton agreed to come to the next OSC meeting with a recommendation on the parcel for potential playing field(s).

Assignments for March Meeting

It was agreed to form two working groups/subcommittees to begin development of evaluation tools for 1) open space and 2) active recreation.

Lee and Dorward discussed the tool used by HCT. Dorward will send it out to the committee as an example.

Lee, Crystoff, Rushmore and Dorward agreed to work on the open space tool. Cohen and Dwight agreed to work on the tool for active recreation. Thornton indicated the new P&R representative to OSC would also join this group.

Dwight and Cohen reminded the committee that subcommittees must adhere to the MA open meeting law requirements, including posting the meeting, holding it in a public space which is ADA accessible, and keeping minutes of the meeting.

Finally, Dorward asked if the committee members were familiar with the Chapter 61 withdrawal process. Several members indicated they were not, so a discussion will be held at the next meeting. Dorward also indicated he would approach the assessors to see if the committee could be notified when land is withdrawn for Chapter 61 as an early warning indicator of a potential sale.

A motion to adjourn was unanimously passed.

Minutes by: Peter Dorward