

**Town of Harvard Open Space Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021 @ 8:30 AM**

Members in attendance: Peter Dorward, Chair (Conservation Commission); Paul Cohen, Vice-Chair (Harvard Athletic Assoc.); Brian Cook (Planning Board); Dan Daly (Parks & Recreation Commission rep); Linda Dwight (Harvard Public Schools); Jim Lee (Harvard Conservation Trust); Rich Maiore (Select Board). *Members absent:* Jo-Anne Crystoff (At Large); Robert Duzan (Agricultural Advisory Commission). *Also attending:* Chris Ryan (Dir Comm & Econ Dev); Liz Allard (Land Use Admin./Conservation Agent)

Peter called the meeting to order at 8:32.

Old Business

OSC Map Update - Peter reported that we are still waiting for map updates from Assessors. He got the elevation feature working in the mapping software and has developed prospective active recreation property lists with three-, four- and five-degrees of slope. He has shared them with Jim; when they get further they will be shared with the committee. As expected, increasing the slope criteria to 4 degrees made more properties eligible to meet the requirement of the active recreation parcels being assessed.

Active Recreation - Dan requested melding the qualitative information on the conservation and active recreation lists. Peter noted that Jim is in possession of that for both lists, that the OSC is dependent on others to get data to us and that when we do get data it is going to be out of date immediately.

Peter asked whether there was a request for anything from Parks & Rec related to a pump track; Dan stated that requirements from have not changed, that P&R seeks property for rectangular playing fields.

Athletic Field Complex - Linda introduced the intent to fulfill the OSC's charge to find land for active recreation by filing an application to the Capital Planning & Investment Committee [CPIC] and to get the Open Space Committee's [OSC] help to put this forward.

Dan presented a Capital Request Form [CPIC application] for an Athletic Field Complex in the amount of \$4.5 million covering fiscal years 2023-2027 for acquisition of 6 acres of suitable land for the development and construction of two multi-use rectangular natural turf playing fields and amenities. He explained the benefits to the town and how the prospective project would be consistent with the goals and objectives set forth in the Open Space & Recreation Plan and subsequent actions called for in the Master Plan and Master Plan update. He asked for OSC to help identify potential funding for the project; he said that the operating budget would need to increase to accommodate the operation and maintenance of the facility; he said the aim would be to minimize any adverse environmental impacts. The application requests two respective amounts; first, \$1 million for the acquisition of land, and second, \$3.5 million for development and construction. There is an opportunity to generate revenues by hosting games, tournaments as well as running various town recreation programs at the complex.

Linda said that the project would take 5 years to complete with various steps like site selection, land acquisition and construction along the way. Paul noted remaining details are fluid and depend on the parcel of land that is acquired. Linda said the project is in the large category, i.e., over \$500 thousand.

Jim said this 5-year approach was the way to go and asked how certain CPIC's acceptance of it as placeholder might be. Linda, as school liaison to CPIC, explained the funding mechanisms CPIC might use and noted that applications for fiscal FY2023 are due Oct 1. Peter asked whether CPIC applications are typically more specific in terms of where the funding comes from; Linda said this approach is typical for projects of this duration, and that it is CPIC which ultimately determines how it is to be funded. Paul added that potential funding sources could

be everything from CPC to debt issuance. Dan said that private funds will be sought and that, as a multi-year project, it can garner funding over multiple budget cycles. Peter observed that, in contrast to typical open space protection projects where the town funds at most a third of the cost of the deal, this is a bigger ask of the town. Linda noted the multiple entities that would be asking the town for implementation of this project. Paul, Linda and Dan summarized the project proposal and discussion for Rich, who joined the meeting.

On a motion from Linda to add OSC to the application to CPIC for the amount of \$4.5 million for an athletic field complex, seconded by Rich, the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

The committee entered executive session to discuss a land purchase or financing the information about which needs to remain confidential. Peter recused himself from the discussion of the executive session but said he would re-join the open session; he made vice-chair Paul Cohen the host and acting chair for the executive session.

New Business

CPC Application – The committee discussed how best to move on two projects being proposed by OSC for which CPC funding is being requested, one, the Prospect Hill Community Harvest Project APR (agricultural preservation restriction) and, second, the Still River Woods conservation project.

On a motion by Jim for the OSC to approve applications to the CPC for funding two projects, one, the CHP [Community Harvest Project APR] project for \$100,000 and, two, the Still River Woods project for \$50,000, seconded by Paul, the motion passed unanimously [*rev. 10/14/2021 P. Dorward recused himself from vote*].

Minutes of 7/22/21 – On a motion by Paul to approve the Minutes of the OSC meeting of July 22, 2021, Brian Cook abstained as he was not a voting member in attendance at that time, and the remaining members in attendance voted unanimously to approve (Linda departed).

Conservation Commission Check-In – Peter clarified the action item to submit the [above] CPC applications after he gets ConComm approval at their meeting on 9/16 at which he will deliver an update from OSC.

Town Land Use Board Organization – Liz explained the proposal to increase the conservation position -- which in part serves the OSC -- for FY2023 to a full-time conservation agent. The change does not create a whole new job but expands the existing part-time role to full-time; it creates 2 part-time jobs under Planning and Zoning: one for administrative assistant and one for sustainability. Liz said that the primary factor driving this change is that the Land Stewardship Subcommittee chair, Wendy Sisson, would be retiring at the end of the year. On a motion by Dan to accept the land use organization as presented, seconded by Paul, the committee voted unanimously to approve.

Adjourn

On a motion by Paul to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rich, the committee voted unanimously to approve.

Next meeting – Thursday, October 14, 2021

Submitted by: Dan Daly

Approved at OSC 10-14-2021