

J.P. Carrier *Robert Veizer*
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Minutes – December 2, 2011
Lunenburg Open Space Ad Hoc Committee
Location: Ritter Memorial Building, 906 Massachusetts Ave.
Time: 9:00 AM

JAN 17 2012

Present: Richard Brockelman, Janice Carrier, Sharon Jordan, Brandon Kibbe, Marion Benson (PB Director), Guest Gary Howland (Ashburnham), Andrea Schnepf (BOH/Farmer's Market)

LUNENBURG TOWN
CLERK OFFICE

Note: Our next meeting will be 1/13/2012, 9 am.

OLD Business (Open Action Items):

1. Followup per 10/4/2011 meeting:
 - a. Lake Shirley Access for Car-top Boating: M. Benson to write letter to F&G that we would like F&G to present to the BOS.
 - b. Womble Property: Sharon and Brandon prepared a package of conservation restriction materials and provided this to Marion on 10/24 at the PB meeting for mailing to Mrs. Womble, including a thank-you card for their time. COMPLETE.
 - c. What is the % of conservation land in our town compared to others? Sharon to research; homes in towns with significant proactive conservation approach show values that appreciate faster, particularly abutting properties. See attached map; MA GIS reports that in 2010 Lunenburg's % of permanently protected OS is between 16% and 25%. This is lower than average for rural communities near us, particularly southwest. Townsend, Shirley, Leominster, Harvard, and Groton have permanently protected 25%-36% of their open space. COMPLETE.
 - d. Right to Farm bylaw: On the 12/2 agenda.
 - e. Chapter 61 details: On the 12/2 agenda.

DISCUSSION on Right to Farm Bylaw:

1. The steps necessary to implement a RTF were discussed. Gary described the Ashburnham experience, and Andrea did the same for Bolton. In Ashburnham, Gary presented the bylaw to the Agricultural Commission before Town Meeting was asked to vote. In Bolton, the proposal went directly to the Town Meeting; there was already broad public support for the idea, as a result of a series of public meetings held before the vote. Ashburnham added a 5-acre restriction for chickens and horses. Since at this time Lunenburg has no such restrictions, we would not propose that here; if the community is educated on responsible animal husbandry, no restrictions should be necessary. Bolton did not add any restrictions. Bolton's AgComm is appointed by the BOS, and is composed of 4 farmers and 1 resident. Andrea supports a Grange for Lunenburg to give an opportunity for small local farmers to showcase their animals and products. The RTF bylaw would protect large and small farmers, particularly from developments and new neighbors who object to agriculture.
2. There may be grant money available for farmers; educating them on how to obtain grants would be an advocacy opportunity for an Ag Comm here. Link to current grants:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/pr-2011/env-enhancement-grants-to-35-ma-farms-awarded.html>
3. We would like to contact local farmers do outreach for support of this initiative. We could also create a list for the town web site. Andrea will provide us names of local farmers that she knows from the Farmer's Market.
4. Some who might be interested in joining an Ag Comm or working for the RTF could be Greg Bingham, Steve Parker and Jim Latanzzi. Other farmers whom we might want to talk to are the

Stillmans and Mr. Violette, and the Kimball's. ACTION ITEM: Contact farmers re: support for the RTF bylaw. ACTION ITEM: The Mass Dept of Agricultural Resources maintains a census of barns; we should inquire about obtaining it.

5. We should put a flyer out at the May 2012 Town Meeting with a template of the RTF bylaw and some points about its benefits, and then add it to the warrant for the Special Town Meeting in Dec. 2012. ACTION ITEM: TBD

DISCUSSION on Chapter 61:

1. Brandon's materials (email of 12/1/2011) were reviewed.
2. Because the statute changed a few years ago, current Chapter 61 enrollees may not be aware of all the provisions, particularly regarding notification and rights of first refusal (ROFR).
3. It is the BOS' role to decide whether the town should exercise its ROFR. However, the clock starts counting down as soon as the enrollee delivers the notice to the BOS, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. Therefore, to expedite the review process, the Planning Board will convene the Open Space Committee as soon as the notice is received, because the OS committee is able to meet within 2 days.
4. We will also customize the Chapter 61 Policy and Process document for Lunenburg, as it is generically worded now and the state recommends that towns revise the template accordingly. There will be no policy changes in the template from the current practice, but it will clarify the rules for all. We will present this to the BOS. We will then request that the policy document be posted on the assessor's web site, and that all enrollees be provided with the material when they apply to enroll their property. ACTION ITEM: Brandon and Sharon are responsible for customizing the template. Presentation to the BOS TBD.

DISCUSSION on Maplewood Golf Course:

1. Brandon reported his conversation with the owner, and his presentation to the Conservation Commission. The Commission is interested in a portion of the property, but not the golf course, and asked Brandon to work on a proposal. Marion reported that there is a development buyer interested. It would be a huge loss to the town open space if the property was developed.