

TOWN OF LUNENBURG

Brandon Kibbe, Chair
Paula Bertram, Vice Chair
Bob Pease
Karin Menard
Sarah Cammer
Michael Toohill
Lynne Man



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Open Space Ad Hoc Committee

Minutes November 24, 2020

The Committee met via Zoom as scheduled with the following members present: Karin Menard, Bob Pease, Lynne Man, Mike Toohill, Brandon Kibbe and Paula Bertram.

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman opened the meeting at 6:03 and read the pandemic notice as posted on the agenda.
2. **Review/Approve 10/13/2020 Minutes** – Bob Pease made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/13/2020, seconded by Lynne Man. Approved unanimously by roll call vote.
3. **Discussion with Nashua River Watershed Associated regarding USDA Forest Legacy Program, possible regional Application, ways Lunenburg can be involved** – Al Futterman of Nashua River Watershed and the Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Project explained the Forest Legacy Program to the Committee. The purpose of the Forest Legacy Program is to identify and conserve environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The program focuses on threatened unprotected land that is an important natural resource and has strategic value. Land can be sold outright or landowners can enter into a conservation restriction with a governmental agency. Lunenburg has several tributaries to the Nashua River and Al requested that the Open Space Committee provide a single point of contact to assist with development of priority properties in Lunenburg that may be well suited for the program. Al will provide additional written information about the program to the Committee.
4. **Adding Layers to the CAI AxisGIS website, including a trails layer and a Town properties layer** – Bob Pease informed the Committee that he is investigating adding a trails layer and possibly a town properties layer to the Town's GIS system with the Assessors and the Land Use Director. Groton currently utilized Open Street Maps and MRPC is using Mr. Mapper. Chris Menard, resident, suggested that whatever is done should be compatible with other hiking apps such as Open Street Maps.
5. **Revision of Conservation Commission land use policy** – Bob Pease informed the Committee that the Conservation Commission will be holding a public forum on December 2nd to discuss the conservation land use policy. Items to be discussed include hunting, snowmobile use and trail maintenance permission. The agenda will be posted and residents are encouraged to participate remotely.

6. **Continuation of discussion regarding 360 Flat Hill Road Chapter 61A Withdrawal Notice; vote on recommendation to the Select Board** – Brandon relayed that he met with the Board of Selectmen a couple of weeks ago regarding this property and had conversations with several people in Town and there is a donor who is willing to make a sizable donation to protect this property, he has not heard from North County Land Trust. The property owner is unable to negotiate or discuss a lease back program as the property is under agreement and it would be breach in contract. Committee discussed the feasibility of working with North County Land Trust on this parcel; North County may be able to assist with bridging the financing, but we would need to locate a buyer for farming rights and possibly subdivide the property to assist with cost. It is not feasible to bring all the pieces together to acquire necessary funding and agreements to purchase this property and meet the legal timeline. Following discussion Paula Bertram made a motion to recommend to the Selectmen that the Town waive its right of first refusal, Mike Toohill seconded, passed unanimously by roll call vote. Paula asked that the Committee hold an information sharing session so that members can learn about the various programs and funding sources that may be available to protect desirable land in the future.
7. **Review updated Town-owned property list. Discuss prioritization for general municipal properties and proposed next steps** – Committee members identified several parcels for future discussion including Fire Road 12, 380 West Street, 1162 Mass Ave, 247 Highland, 690 Goodrich Road, 860 Leominster Road, Parmenter Road and O Flynn Road. Committee members will research these properties further and review other parcels under general municipal ownership for further discussion at the next meeting.
8. **Public Comment** –
 - Paula Bertram asked about the status of 250 Howard Street. Brandon responded that an agreement has been signed and that Special Town Meeting voted to approve the acquisition and passed over exercising its right of 1st refusal. The buyer is in the process of putting together an ANR plan for approval.
 - Chris Menard suggested that the Town needs to take a proactive approach to protecting desirable open space such as 360 Flat Hill and that creation of a special stabilization fund should be considered so that a funding source is available when property becomes available. Chris will offer the suggestion to the Finance Committee and Paula will relay to Capital Planning.
9. **Adjourn** – Paula Bertram made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 p.m., Lynne Man seconded. Voted unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Bertram