

## Open Space Ad Hoc Committee

### Minutes December 15, 2020

The Committee met via Zoom as scheduled with the following members present: Karin Menard, Bob Pease, Lynne Man, Mike Toohill (Mike left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.), Brandon Kibbe and Paula Bertram (Paula joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.).

1. **Call to Order** - - Chairman opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m. and read the pandemic notice as posted on the agenda.
2. **Review/ Approve 11/24/2020 Minutes** – Bob Pease made a motion to approve the minutes, Mike Toohill seconded. Brandon suggested a minor change in #3 (*Discussion with Nashua River Watershed Associated regarding USDA Forest Legacy Program, possible regional Application, ways Lunenburg can be involved*) in minutes; striking a non-profit trust to conservation restriction with a governmental agency. Bob Pease amended his motion, Mike Toohill accepted amendment. Voted unanimously (Paula did not vote as she had not yet joined)
3. **Review member recommendations for landowner outreach for potential inclusion in a Forest Legacy “aggregation” application as presented by Nashua River Watershed Association at 11/24/2020 meeting** – Al had emailed additional information about the program and requested a list of properties that may be appropriate for the participation in the program. Brandon had explained to Al that we would have to cultivate a list by talking to residents etc. Al is on a tight timeline to get the application in. Committee reviewed the land inventory overview map and discussed properties that are in Chapter Land and might be potential candidates. Mike Toohill suggested that we could send a letter to landowners to find out if any are interested in participating in the forest legacy program. Bob Pease expressed concern about the bandwidth of the Committee to undertake this task, our goal this year is to review Town properties and taking on new projects may not be feasible at this time. Lynn asked what the advantage is to the Town to participate; Brandon responded that the Forest Legacy Program is a funding source for Conservation Land. After discussion it was the consensus of the Committee that at this point in time we do not have any identified projects to include in the aggregation project. Brandon will inform Al Futterman.

*Paula joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.*

4. **Continuation of General Municipal Land discussion regarding parcels of interest for potential designation for conservation, open space, or recreation purposes** – Bob Pease had developed a list of properties that might be of interest; he noted that there was a great list in the open space plan that Brandon developed. It had a lot of information regarding various parcels. Bob compared the list from the open space plan to the information we received in the list from the Assessors for 2020 to determine what parcels were new and what were no longer town owned and merged the two, he then removed land that is already Conservation or Parks and/or in active use by the community and came up with a list that he believes Open Space should be analyzing which will be forwarded to the

Committee. Paula explained that many of the properties that currently identified as being in tax title have not yet been taken by the Town as it has not gone through the entire land court process. Brandon noted that the Committee had suggested that regular “education” item be included in future agendas and having someone provide an overview of the entire tax title process would be helpful. In the Open Space plan the need for “pocket parks” or community gardens is identified and some of the parcels currently in tax title might be ideal for that. Paula said she will reach out to the Tax Collector, Myleen Mallari, and see if she would be willing to provide an overview. At the last meeting the Committee had identified several properties that may be of interest including Fire Road 12, 380 West Street, 1162 Mass Ave, 247 Highland, 690 Goodrich Road, 860 Leominster Road, Parmenter Road and 0 Flynn Road. Lynn Man said that many of the properties that were identified in November do not appear to be Town owned or in Tax title currently. Brandon reviewed the original list within the Open Space Plan and 1162 Mass Ave was in tax title then but may have been redeemed, Fire Road 12 is not on the list either, Bob commented that it should be as Conservation is dealing with a town owned land issue in this area, he determined it is listed as owner unknown on the current list it is identified as 0 Lake Shirley.

**51 Parmenter** – Committee discussed potential use of this 0.31 acre parcel. Property slopes away from the road not particularly attractive from development but could be developed. An interesting access point to the lake for canoes and kayaks; but there is not sufficient room for a boat dock etc. Committee discussed parked, the property may be able to accommodate 3 or 4 cars and there is a potential for on street parking. Lynn noted that the area is very residential and parking off street may not be desirable to the residents. Brandon pointed out that this may be a controversial access site as it is residential, we would have to take a measured approach and would have to involve the neighbors. Bob commented that it may appropriate for this property to be under the jurisdiction of Parks, he suggested that the committee look at property identified as 0 Lake Shirley Reservoir which is 3.3 acres.

**0 Lake Shirley Reservoir (off Fire Road 12)** – This 3.3 acre property is located in area that is called stump cove. Although there is a portion of the property that accesses the lake apparently it is being utilized by the adjacent property owner. This may be the parcel that was gifted to the Community when Lunenburg took control of the Dam to provide public access.

**0 Fire Road 12** – There are two parcels currently identified as 0 Flynn Road, a 0.04 parcel and one that is 0.48 acres. Karin noted that the 0.04 parcel may have been paved by a neighbor. This could serve as rooftop access to the lake (canoes/kayaks etc.). Paula noted you may be able to put parking of the larger parcel and walk to the small one for lake access. Brandon questioned if making a public area on a private road would require the Town to provide road maintenance. If we decide to pursue, we will need to check with Town Counsel.

**860 Reservoir** – This 6.7 acre parcel is also owned by the Town and in the vicinity of 0 Fire Road 12, there is also a smaller town property that abuts. Currently this parcel is identified on the Assessors list as Cemetery Department, but the CAI database indicates Board of Selectmen, Town of Lunenburg. Need to verify that the taking process for this parcel has been completed. This is a valuable piece of property that may be useful to the Community. It may provide parking access to the lake, however crossing the road may be dangerous. Brandon noted that the State of Massachusetts has an Office of Fishing and Boating Access and their entire purpose is to provide public access to bodies of water and they have a dedicated funding source. When they develop new access on bodies of water, they have a fleet of capabilities engineering, etc. and usually what they look for in return is that the Town manages

the access point. We may want to engage the office of fishing and boating access about land on a large great pond that does not have any developed access. Brandon will provide contact information to Paula so that she can reach out. They would fund the development parking etc.

For the next meeting, people should prioritize their parcels of interest.

5. **Questions about the Assessor's database** – Bob noted that the properties that are currently listed as owner's unknown do not have consistency in the ownership naming; he will be reaching out the assessors to determine why and if there is a difference in where the parcel may be in the taking process.
6. **Parks update on Marshall Park master planning (if available)** – Parks is moving slow in the process. Each Commissioner developed a "wish list" which was compiled by the Recreation Director in a prioritized list. Planning funding was requested from the Capital Plan to begin the design process. The Skate Park Group is coming to meet with the Parks Commission to talk about potentially moving the skate park project into Marshall Park. Brandon recommended that Karin get in touch with PARC Grant Coordinator for advice and networking. Liz Murphy who works in Planning in Fitchburg may also be a great resource.
7. **Conservation update on rules revisions (if available)** – Bob informed the Committee that the Conservation Commission had a public comment forum on possible changes. There was limited feedback on the majority of potential changes to the rules, other than on hunting. The opportunity for additional public input will be provided. Town Counsel had indicated the Commission does not have the ability to make regulations, but rather they adopt policies. Rich Bursch, Commissioner, has found the Conservation Commissions does have the ability to adopt regulations; further clarification from Town Counsel will be sought. Bob noted that the Commission is reviewing the policy for volunteer work on conservation land. Due to limited staff, volunteer labor is crucial. Bob pointed out that currently the only group that does trail work is the Lunenburg Snow Riders.
8. **Set next meeting date** – For the next four months we will be meeting the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. (rather than 6:00).
9. **Public Comment** – Paula informed the Committee that at the last Capital Planning Committee she had relayed the comment from Chris Menard about creating a funding source for land acquisition. Members of the Committee were intrigued by the idea but had questions/concerns on how it could be implemented due to the funding mechanism and required action by Town Meeting. Town Manager is going to investigate further. Brandon mentioned that participated in the Community Preservation Act would be ideal.
10. **Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. by unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paula Bertram*