

Minutes of Open Space Committee Meeting, Nov. 16, 2022

In Attendance: Janet Chayes, Andy Levchuk, Mac McCoy, Michele Turre

Last Meeting Minutes Approved: Aug. 22, 2022

Bigelow Meadow Renovation

Proposal from Abound Design & Landscape presented by proprietor, Owen Wormser, a new resident to Conway on Shelburne Falls Rd. The company's focus is on regenerative landscape design. He expressed interest in this project as it requires input over time, especially in restoring to native, and then maintaining it, while working closely with the community. Has been in business nearly 20 years, recently worked with Turners Falls to do street planters, and engineered a meadow project near City Hall in Noho.

Routinely bills at \$100/hour, but willing to donate his time. Most interested in involving the community.

Project cost est. at \$100-120k, based on submitted plan. Plan was not adopted; rather it was agreed to develop over time with community input – especially neighbors.

Asked how to attract volunteers and involvement...

- Turn work days into workshop so volunteer work is compensated with education.
- Involve related committee members and groups (Garden Club, Pollinators, Forest & Trails Committee).

Expressed interest of volunteering his time for development and coordination as a contribution to the community.

Andy suggested Owen to draft a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) in the form of a cover letter be drafted to go w/ the proposal to confirm his intention to volunteer his time. Owen agreed that would make it clear and simple.

Next steps

- Janet moved to form an ad hoc committee; Andy volunteered to lead. Group agreed.
- Set up a meeting(s) w/ the abutters and invite them to come future meetings and keep them updated.

Proposal for Installation of Pickle Ball Courts at South River Meadow Presented by Jan Warner, Chair of Parks & Rec.

- First approached Parks & Rec committee about creating pickle ball courts, then joined the comm., now the chair.
- Town allowed court lines to be drawn on the Basketball court and use of the storage shed.
- Started a pickleball schedule in May. Has growing participation w/ most ages. Wants to expand court options.
- Proposal is for 4 courts to be built on South River Meadow (map provided). Project cost est. at \$100-120k.
- Ron Sweet is willing to do all site work and bidding.

Asked how many people would play at one time (noise); what parking is needed (capacity of upgraded parking) and if a pervious surface is possible (no, it's like a tennis court).

- Jan reports 16 people at play at max. Parking capacity doesn't seem to be a problem.

Drainage of courts and possible impact on the South River was raised as a concern but project is over 200 feet from river which is the minimum set back. Noise to neighbors considered; Jan presented a letter to neighbors and plans to meet with them about the proposal. Mac noted that the project might bring more use of the SRiver Meadow trails and could contribute to the remaining development work for a gathering area adjacent to courts with info kiosk, picnic tables, etc. Jan said she's working w/ CPA to get them to put the proposal as a warrant at the next Town Meeting.

The Committee did not vote on the proposal.

Proposal Tom Ricardi Bird of Prey / Nature Talk

Janet explained that Aimee had consulted with Tom about a presentation. He's has done many talks at past town festivals. He's willing to do one any time. Free but will accept donations.

Suggested to hold the event either in the school or in the Town Hall. Town Hall preferred for town center access. Proposed to schedule event in mid-March, perhaps 4pm on a Sunday. Members indicated their support.

Meeting ended at 8:35 pm