

## Minutes of Open Space Committee Meeting, April 11, 2022

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Janet Chayes, Michele Turre, Andrew Levchuk, Mac McCoy, Steve Jackson, Aimee Anderson

Others: Cayte McDonough, Cynthia Lawton-Singer, Colin Mettey, Cynthia Racicot

1. After introductions the committee approved the minutes of March 16, 2022.

### 2. Native Plantings for Town Properties

A document *DRAFT Town Properties for Potential Native Plant Management* was shared via Zoom.

Discussed proposal to improve appearance of highly visible town properties by removing invasives. Sites included:

Transfer Station: Knotweed on lower bank

- Bittersweet at entrance to Transfer Station

Triangle (with creek flowing through) at Rt 116 & Graves Rd.

- o Baystate Forestry est. cost to remove invasives: \$400 over 3 years; mix of cut and treat w/ herbicide.

Janet noted the committee is not required to get competitive bids for smaller amounts. Colin thought anything over \$10,000 needs competitive bids. Andy will check to confirm requirements.

Michele noted an RDA (Request for Determination) from the Conservation Commission is required, as is a public hearing and notice to abutters for full permission to do the work at above Triangle site because it's near a stream.

Janet moved to also get a bid for removal of invasives at the Transfer Station. All agreed. Aimee agreed to inquire with the Board of Health about getting their approval for potential application of herbicide and eventually something native to be planted to replace the invasives once removed.

Cayte reviewed the status of the proposed native planting in front of Town Office. She had spoken with Ron Sweet. He has a pending project to replace the ramp and some construction will be happening for some time so the proposed planting will have to wait. Ron also said he would need a plan with cost for planting and maintenance before he could approve.

Cayte and Cynthia Lawton-Singer will also look at other small town properties for possible similar projects.

Cayte asked if funds can be set aside for long term maintenance of such projects. Janet noted there are potentially extra funds in the budget. Coordination with other town groups may also be sought after for assistance with maintenance. *Pollinate Conway!* recently met with remaining Conway Garden Club members about past efforts to maintain similar sites. Janet noted that many years ago, Parks & Recreation had some coordinating experience.

RE: Concern about cutting of roadside trees by Highway Department.

Cayte spoke w/ Walter Goodrich about the role of the Tree Warden. He was only aware of his jurisdiction being for trees on town property. He will look into his role further for oversight of non-town property trees along the roadsides.

### 3 Bigelow Meadow

This 2.3-acre property, just north and uphill from Shelburne Falls Road along-side Cemetery Road, was gifted for use for town residents as permanent open space. Currently, it's not used much. Past thoughts were to include as part of walking trail from South River Meadow. The Conway Pollinator Plan includes a simple design

for this area. The town mows maybe once a year but invasives plants taken over, especially Japanese Bittersweet, which are matted from mowing. Some adjoining properties are fairly exposed and there is some concern about impact of much development on neighbors.

- Baystate Forestry past estimated cost to remove invasives: \$2,000 in year one, \$1,600 in year 2, \$800 in year 3, using mix of cut and treat w/ herbicide.

Mac voiced concern about the cost of development and maintenance vs. available budget and potential use. As a comparison he asked about the cost of annual maintenance of the S. River Meadow and who is doing it. Janet stated that cost is \$800 / year by Baystate Forestry, who is reportedly doing a great job.

Janet noted the committee (or town?) has a “small cities grant” of about \$40,000 to cover costs related to this type of work.

Mac requested an agenda item be added to the next meeting to review of list of funds available to the committee alongside a list of current and potential project expenses so the committee members could better understand the scope of available funds and possible programs.

Andy has a friend who runs UMass invasives program Randy Prostack (<https://ag.umass.edu/people/randall-randy-prostack>) who’s offered to help with this topic and may be able to communicate points with the highway department. Has a lengthy and intensive presentation on invasives. He could potentially join by conference call at next meeting to discuss.

#### **4. South River Meadow**

##### **Dogs on Leash Signs**

Cynthia Racicot brought forth concerns about dogs not being on leash in the meadow and concerns for disruptive dogs and owners for other walkers, as well as for. Mac suggested this could be incorporated into the larger signage agenda for the meadow parking and walking areas (history of area, the recent flood control project, native plants and animals to look for, etc.). Cynthia volunteered to find out the wording of any town ‘leash law’ or ordinance to be discussed along with the larger signage project for next meeting.

##### **Birdhouses**

Volunteer Katie Clark Waddell is now monitoring the four bluebird/tree swallow boxes!

**Garlic Mustard Pulls** scheduled for May 21 and June 5,

#### **5. Nature Talk & Walks**

Proposed Bird Talk, May 15 by ornithologist Mara Silver

Janet requested to pay \$300 for the speaker. Mac asked if there was a standard payment for speakers. Janet noted it was mostly case specific and could depend on funding from other town groups (Cultural Council).

Aimee proposed the stipend be upped to \$350. Michele moved that the event be co-sponsored by the Friends of the South River. So moved and approved unanimously by the Committee.

#### **6. South River State Forest**

Recent cutting has been completed. A walking group is to form to review state of cutting and status of the access road. State forester is Nick A. (Mac subsequently emailed the cutting plan to members).

**Next meeting** will be held in person on May 10 at 6:30pm, presumably at the town office. Members and others are invited to pre-meeting gathering at 6pm at the Bigelow Property for an informal site visit.

Mac made a motion to adjourn. All agreed.

Open Space Committee  
**DRAFT Town Properties for Potential Native Plant Management**

Main Street Area

- 1 Town Office
- 2 Island front of Library
- 3 Island at Temperance Fountain
- 4 Memorial Park (where trees were just removed)
- 5 Post Office
- 6 Edges of Ballfield

Other Areas

- 1 Transfer Station
  - a. Invasive Bittersweet on gates
  - b. Japanese Knotweed on lower bank
- 2 Graves Rd/Rte. 116 wetland island (photo attached)



- 3 Grammar School
  - a. Initially just remove 3 huge burning bushes at parking lot edge, facing pond

Major New Project

Bigelow Meadow (2.3 acres)

Ongoing

South River Meadow

Problematic

Roadsides

Anticipated

Town Cemeteries (Cemetery Commission)

Town Forests (Forests & Trails Committee)

Other town parcels include areas upstream of Covered Bridge 6.2 acres (see map below)

