

## Minutes of Open Space Committee Meeting, May 10, 2022

### In Attendance:

- Committee Members: Janet Chayes, Michele Turre, Andrew Levchuk, Mac McCoy, Aimee Anderson
- Non- Committee Members: Grant Ingle (management consultant and chair of original street scape committee in the town from 2006), Cynthia Lawton-Singer (part of the Conway pollinator group).

### Approve prior minutes

After introductions the committee approved the minutes of April 11, 2022.

### Pollinator Plan: Bigelow Meadow

Some members met for a site visit at the Bigelow Meadow along w/ representatives from the Conway pollinator group to assess the property for a sitting area and walkway. Multiple invasives were noted along w/ discussion of how to manage them. Next step decisions were deferred to the next meeting.

### Follow up about Invasives at the entrance to Transfer Station Etc. From Last Meeting

A motion was made to re-affirm approval for Baystate Forestry to remove invasives at estimated cost of \$400 over 3 years; mix of cut and treat w/ herbicide. Committee approved the motion.

Aimee asked if a knowledgeable committee member could speak w/ the Town Administrator about the proposal to remove bittersweet from the dump gate. Aimee will connect w/ Colin Mettey at Baystate Forestry to speak with the TA about that.

Janet asked Andy to renew attempts to contact Randy Prostack at UMass for advice to town highway department on roadside management for invasive versus native plants.

<https://ag.umass.edu/people/randall-randy-prostack>

### Native Plantings for Town Center

Space in front of town office for development of native plant project was reviewed.

- Janet spoke w/ Ron Sweet about lockable faucet for managing water access.
- Selectboard had approved plan but Ron Sweet had some concerns and walkway renovation plans that pre-empted forward movement.
- While plans for that space are on hold, a similar, smaller scale project will proceed on the Christmas tree island in front of the library – pending approval from Selectboard and resolution of the water issue.

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Grant presented the 2006 Street Scape Committee plans that he was involved with were used to develop the green triangle in front of the library, and reviewed how sidewalks were put in, and how the current street scape was created. It was an extensive process with a lot of public input. His recommendation is before making any changes there should be a process of input.

- It was noted that it's difficult to maintain a plan as random town members or members of other committees will sometimes make changes without approval.
- Further challenge is that there is no institutional memory of plans that were made.
- Also, it's hard to get clubs or entities to take responsibility of care and maintenance.

Discussion about appropriate process to initiate an approval of development of a natives planting, whether through Select, town administrator, etc., with time for public comment.

The challenge is providing long-term budget, and consistent and appropriate supervision. Changes in committee membership and leadership over time will result in project lapsing. Support and guidance of Select Board is important but due to turnover it's hard

Other prominent and focused areas for development of natives...

- Triangle at intersection with Shelburne Falls Road.
- Triangle at intersection Whately Road intersection.
- Area at foot of old grammar school.
- Area just past the Covered Bridge and millstone.
- At the entrance to the Transfer Station

Proposal to create an agenda for reaching out to townspeople about these projects.

- Mac mentioned use of Conway Currents.
- Michele mentioned to use the town website updates/alerts (townspeople must have been signed up on town website for emails of updates and alerts).

### **South River Meadow**

RE: Dog Signage at South River Meadow

Motion was made to purchase 2 "Obey Leash Laws" signs, and 1 "Clean up after your pet".

- Mac to follow up with Cynthia Racicot to request her to locate and purchase the signs.

Michele noted that on May 21 Trees will be delivered to South River Meadow. She and Janet will check to see how many and decide about alerting people to assist.

### **Review of Committee Sources of Budget/Grant Funds**

There are 3 Sources of Funding for the OSC.

1. Town Appropriation to Open Space Committee Operating Budget (Account #170).
  - a. \$3,100 for FY 2022, included mowing. Expecting the same in FY 2023.
  - b. Unspent funds revert on June 30 (unless for a project in process).
2. Small Cities Grant from the State (Account #416)
  - a. This is the source of \$43,000 that the Committee can use to implement the OSRP plan.
  - b. These funds could be used for the Bigelow meadow.
  - c. These funds can used until they're gone.
3. Third is 3 separate Community Preservation Act grants (Fund #380)
  - a. 5836 for South River Meadow Signage 6/30/22 Balance \$2,765
  - b. 5829 for stilt grass removal 6/30/22 Balance \$2,750
  - c. 5831 for removal of invasives at South River Meadow 6/30/22 Balance \$1,860
  - d. These funds can be used until they're gone.

### **Nature Talk & Walks**

The "Birds of Our Meadows" presentation is scheduled for Sun. May 15<sup>th</sup> Town Hall 4pm. Members were encouraged to spread the word.

### **New Business Not Anticipated:**

Motion was made to authorize spending for advertising and permitting for invasive removal projects.

Next Meeting Schedule

A date was note selected but Doodle poll was suggested.

Mac moved to adjourn the meeting. Approved.