

Shelburne Open Space Committee Meeting October 26, 2015

Members present Rita Jaros, Linda Herrera, Cynthia Boettner, Gene Butler, Jim Perry, Larry Flaccus, David Schochet, John Wheeler, Norm Beebe, Joel Dwight

David called the meeting to order at 7:06pm

Joel appointed Secretary pro tem

The minutes from 9-28-15 were accepted with one minor correction.

David collectively asked the members what the committee should be working on.

Linda suggested she could make a phone call to Guy Wheeler about public access controlled by the water department. Her questions would include is there a map, land status/protection, his advise on who to speak with for further information, would they be open to hikers on the snow mobile trail, would they be open to landscape partnership possibilities.

Jim suggested we look into land in Shelburne that is in Chapter 61B for recreation and also town owned land or land open to the public, such as Wilcox Hollow, some of the group looked at maps.

David told us the culvert project results are still being formulated. David inquired about the project and got a response from someone at UMass who will get back to us about outreach from the culvert project sometime in the future.

John gave the planning Board report. He told us about FRCOG working on a template for cluster housing and that the Planning Board is looking into subdivision rules. He told us they had looked into the plans surrounding towns had made and liked what Buckland had done. On the coming Wednesday Peggy Sloane and Pat Smith from FRCOG will present a draft of options to be considered by the Planning Board. Larry wondered how their plans might work with proposed 40A changes being considered by the state. The Planning Board is hoping to get things ready for a public hearing in December.

Linda met with Prudy Wholey of the Commission regarding Norm and Lisa Davenport's concerns about local agriculture. The Ag Commission was unable to meet in October and Linda is planning on attending the November meeting. The Davenports had been at an Ag Commission meeting. Linda asked what the members present what everyone thought of Norm's presentation. Jim thought it was just informative. Rita thought he was looking for help and prepared a nice outline sharing her views. Larry thought the bottom line for Norm was a local milk processing plant. Rita also thought Norm was looking for someone to further the conversation. She also thought a brain storming session that might be spearheaded by CISA would bring interested parties together to further explore this discussion. David thought the message was that the community must be mobilized to support or it will fail. Linda will present these thoughts at the next Ag Commission meeting.

The Open Space Committee will soon have three openings. We can have fourteen total members including four who are liaisons for other committees (Ag Commission, Recreation Committee, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission). Linda or Joel will follow up with a new prospective member.

John will let David know about scheduling of the next Ag Commission meeting. The Ag Commission has openings for three new members. David and Larry will consider attending the next Ag Commission meeting to find out about their interest in contacting CISA with our committee about having a forum about local ag support in line with Norm and Lisa's thoughts.

Larry told us about the Solarize Shelburne Process. Solarize Mass is trying to get communities together to reduce the cost of acquiring solar equipment. Buckland, Ashfield, and Plainfield are already on board and have quite a lot of interest. They are looking for groups of a thousand homes to join and perhaps Shelburne could partner with Colrain and Conway to meet the home number requirement. The Solarize Mass folks would then put in money to promote and educate about solar. The Buckland, Ashfield, Plainfield already has 90 projects in process. Larry also said Co Op Power is putting in an installation in Greenfield that people can buy shares in. There is a thirty percent Federal tax credit that is good through 2016. There is also a program to sell solar credits to power companies to increase their solar producing members. Larry said the payback from utilizing these programs would be five to six years. Norm added there is a six week state approval process, a power company connect process, and you have to be connected before 2016 to qualify. Larry thought we should send a letter to the Selectboard to encourage them to join in on this process to be in the running to be one of ten groups that the state will select in a competitive process. Cynthia asked if there was any interest from Charlemont and Larry explained they get their power from a different source. Andrew Baker is involved in promoting this project. Norm said there was a good deal of interest in the public meeting that was held in the Falls. Cynthia said she attended a meeting on Saturday and noted a concern was raised about losing open space to large solar installations. Someone from the State Government was there and said the Governor felt that way as well and there maybe forth coming rules to steer away from that. Larry also said there is a list for folks that have an interest in the solar program. Greenfield has their own program underway. Larry made a motion to send a recommendation to the Selectboard to engage in this program. The motion was seconded and passed. So Larry will draft a letter of support to be forwarded to the Selectboard.

Cynthia spoke about the Mass Wildlife Conference she attended on Saturday. The state is starting a new grant program to be used to promote land that could benefit from having a plan to help wildlife. The grants are due the end of November so they are looking for projects that are ready to go. Being open to hunting and recreation help you to rise up in the competitive standings. Cynthia thought the core focus was on land trust and municipalities rather than individuals. Game species and rare and endangered species would help competitors gain in the rankings. The work would have to be completed by June 30, 2016. This program may be repeated again in future years.

Cynthia also attended a workshop in Leyden about the landship partnership program to bring together landowners for Forest for the Birds grant program that is coming up. She said many knowledgeable people were in attendance. Franklin Land Trust has been instrumental in putting together workshops.

David talked about someone he knew in Cummington who received a grant for a forestry plan to help her turtles.

David then spoke about a trail conference in Leominster on Saturday November 14 which includes field trips to Mt Wachusett, Lancaster, and Clinton trails. Community field trips are on Friday the 13th and the conference on Sat the 14th.

David then told up about pipeline developments. KinderMorgan is submitting their application to build the pipeline in November. The comment period has already ended. The US Senate is about to take up a bill for exporting energy and expediting pipeline construction. Larry suggested it was a good time to contact Senators if you want to present opposition. He said some towns had banded together as a group in opposition. David will forward some information to us.

Rita reported she just retrieved forty dollars from the Information Center brochure sales. She thinks we have enough brochures to cover next summer's demand.

Linda and Joel will look into leaning signs on the Ridge Trail. It is thought that John Taylor's son may have the extra signs which have come up missing. Rita reported that lots of brochures have been going at the Visitors Center. Jim told us many people are using the trail from Halligan Ave to the fire tower.

The group recognized Rita for her years of service to the Open Space Committee and accepted her resignation from the Committee with regret. She will make herself available for one time helping projects and consulting.

Meeting adjourned 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Dwight

Secretary Pro Tem