



# MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

CONSERVATION COMMISSION • TOWN HALL  
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## Open Space and Recreation Committee

June 22, 2016

Town Hall, Room 7 ♦ 6:30 PM

## Meeting Minutes

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**Members Present:** Mike Chapman, Helen Bethell, Francie Caudill, Steve Jaworski, Sara Levensohn, Connie Sullivan

**Others Present:** Mary Reilly

Mike Chapman, Chair, opened the meeting.

### Meeting Minutes

There were no minutes ready for review so these were deferred to the next meeting.

### Master Planning Committee and Open Space

Axel Magnuson, who is a member of Manchester's Master Planning Committee, asked to attend this OSRC meeting to discuss some concerns he had regarding the disposition of open space in Manchester in relation to the town's Master Plan.

Axel stated his desire to form a relationship with the OSRC. He said that the Master Planning Committee is looking at the long term—beyond the usual five to seven years. One interest is around preserving the availability and quality of the town's water supply.

Axel said that he wanted to get some consensus among various town committees and conservation organizations (MECT, Essex Co Greenbelt, etc.) to agree to what needs to be done towards this objective. The goal would be to craft a unified statement as to why preserving open space is important and how this will be accomplished.

Axel would like the OSRC to be open to the idea of meeting with other groups involved in conservation efforts (e.g., the MECT, TTOR and ECGA) to have a focused discussion and reaching common ground.

Mike Chapman noted that the genesis of the OSRC brought together multiple constituencies to put together the 7-Year Plan and that it would be appropriate for the OSRC to have input into the Master Plan. Mike asked if others had opinions about this. Steve Jaworski said that he agreed but that it might be difficult to arrange since we only meet once a month for an hour.

Axel suggested that we do this as efficiently as possible by getting MECT, ECGA and maybe the TPL together with OSRC perhaps on a weekend. The desired outcome to this meeting is to produce a summary document or statement (present a united strategy). This could serve as a basis for a pointed discussion with other groups and interests (BoS, Conservation Commission, etc.). Ultimately this will be weighed with other demands and prioritized in terms of town resources and budgets.

Helen Bethell noted the ECGA has a 10-year Plan for its organization but that even MECT doesn't know what it is. MECT has a plan as well which is based on protecting biodiversity, water protections, etc. Helen emphasized the ECGA is very good at strategizing the acquisition of open space (public/private partnerships).

#### Updates/Status of 7-Year Action Plan Goals

Mike Chapman noted that we had talked previously about doing some short-term projects--Dexter Pond, Wyman Hill and Powder House Hill and suggested that we talk about their status.

Dexter Pond – Mike asked if we had any consensus of what we'd like to undertake in Mike McDonagh's plans for Dexter Pond (part 2). One of the suggested improvements would be repairing the footbridge. Steve also noted that Mike had proposed a 75-100 foot bog bridge for a particularly wet stretch along the trail.

Steve said that he had been looking at how to construct the bog bridge—he is going to come up with a design that could be presented to the Conservation Commission. For the bridge, he thought it best to keep it very simple. Steve's goal is to have something in to the ConCom for its next meeting but isn't sure about the submittal dates. Steve will do the application, depending on what Chris Bertoni thinks is appropriate.

Wyman Hill – Mike reported that he and Francie had walked up Wyman Hill with George Smith and a small group. He thought the trail up to Wyman Hill could use some trail markers but apparently the trail is on MECT property and not the town's. Francie suggested that maybe it's best left as it is (it's very steep). Mike thought we should defer work on the Wyman Hill property for now.

Another possibility is doing something at Winthrop Field. We could participate in some annual maintenance activities (clearing brush along the Bridge St. wall and around the pond) in August. The pond clearing is usually done at the end of Oct or early Nov. This could be done to assist the Winthrop Field Committee with the OSRC taking the lead. The purpose is to clear the undergrowth around the pond to allow the shrubs and native plants to survive. Mike thought suggested asking the public to volunteer as well which could raise the visibility of the committee. We could get articles in the Crickets, Gloucester News, etc.

Mary asked about brush cutting around the pond which a resident had complained about. Mike said that he was aware of the complaint and stated that the reason they did this was to give the native plantings (winterberry, high bush blueberry, silky dogwoods) a chance to survive. (All of the work is done with hand clippers.) Mike noted that there's also a very sticky plant that grows up over these plants but doesn't know what it is.

Powder House Hill – we need to take a look to see if it needs trail maintenance. Helen said that it could use trail markers since people often get lost up there. Steve took a walk through the reservation and he thought the trails looked pretty good but noted that there was some erosion at the Elm Street entrance.

The planning of where the markers should go would be the most time-consuming. Helen noted that Bill Vachon could be a good resource as to what's needed. Mary noted that there is a small trail map of Powder House Hill in the MECT map brochure.

Mike said he would get a hold of Bill Vachon and speak to him about this. The MECT map could be used as a basis.

Francie announced that the Coastal Stream Team had scheduled their annual loosestrife removal for July 30<sup>th</sup> and thought the OSRC could partner with them for this event and also include a guided trail walk (Francie said she could do this). The event would publicize the new sign and improved trails. The public will be invited to volunteer. Francie will write something up for the Cricket and will circulate it for review.

Mike – regarding the work plans, it would make sense to revisit them and get a sense of what's left to be done at the next couple of meetings. Steve asked whether we could take donations to do some small projects. Sara

noted that town committees are prohibited from fund raising. We could accept donations from a “friends of” group, but not directly.

Steve brought up the fact that we need to let people know where other open space parcels are; consider kiosks and parking areas.

Mike asked if there were any other items that we needed to discuss.

Mary gave a quick update regarding the Gourdeau property. She had a phone conversation with Peter Gourdeau about a parcel he owns in the northwest area of town (also in the watershed to Gravelly and Round Ponds). She reported that he was interested in selling it but wasn't clear what terms he was looking for. She also has been in touch with Chris LaPointe at ECGA who said that it would have to have an IRS appraisal in order for Greenbelt to participate in purchasing the property. Most likely Gourdeau couldn't develop it since much of it is wetland and there's no access. Mary said that Chris LaPointe (ECGA) may want to partner with the town to purchase the lot. They are going to meet with Peter next week.

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 pm.

This was Sara's last meeting with the committee. All wished her well and thanked her for her service.