



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

CONSERVATION COMMISSION • TOWN HALL
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Open Space and Recreation Committee

January 27, 2016

Town Hall, Room 7 ♦ 6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

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

Others Present: Mary Reilly, Grants Administrator

Chairman Mike Chapman opened briefly reviewed the agenda items.

Mary Reilly said that before beginning the agenda items that she wanted to let everyone know about the upcoming Coastal Resilience Forum to be held on Feb 11 and handed out flyers for the event.

Mike then noted that there were several action items from last meeting:

- Discussion of Goals 3, 5, 6 and 7
- List of trail maps
- List of contacts for the committee

List of Available Maps

Francie Caudill offered a list of maps that she knows of:

- MECT Trail Map
- Essex County Greenbelt Guide (available from Essex County Greenbelt)
- Cape Ann Trails Stewards (available at Seaside Cycles)

Mary said that there was also a map for Chebacco Woods (some trails are in Manchester). Mary also asked what trails were included in the Cape Ann Trails Stewards guide. Francie said that she would take a look and report next time.

Meeting Minutes of 1/6/16

Mary noted that she sent them out. Helen Bethell noted a small typo which will be corrected. This will be corrected.

Steve Jaworski made a motion to accept the minutes as written

Second made by Sara Levensohn

Vote: Unanimous to accept the minutes of 1/6/16

Goals 3, 5, 6 and 7 of the Action Plan

Goal 3 (management of existing town-owned parcels), assigned to Steve Jaworski, Helen Bethell and Mike Chapman. Steve handed out a draft work strategy that he created. Steve noted that because Manchester has so much open space that we should pick a few parcels that we would focus on. He suggested that we categorize parcels into four categories in order to determine which ones to focus on. The four categories are: unique recreation value improvements; existing recreation value improvements; candidates for new improvements; maintenance only.

Steve mentioned some resources that may help in our effort (included on his action strategy). After going through the categories and narrowing down the parcels we would then have to create a master plan

Helen noted that Cape Ann Trails Association is doing a lot of work with trails in the area and that we should work with them as much as possible.

Mike asked about how to go about parceling out the parcels into four categories. Steve said that he knows many of the properties but not all of them and it would take some effort to assess them all. Steve noted that there's a lot of dialog that has to take place given that many of the parcels have different stakeholders (e.g., Manchester-Essex Woods). There's also work being spearheaded by Mike McDonagh of MECT at Dexter Pond which is a town-owned property as a gesture of cooperation with the town as part of the MECT strategic plan.

Helen noted that Bill Vachon is the contact at MECT for trails and would be good resource for our group. Mary thought that Bill would be a good resource for many town properties as well.

Mike said that it would be good to concentrate on properties that already have trails, just to narrow it down a bit. Francie added that we're also only considering town-owned properties.

It was noted that the OSRC has a list of properties (contained in an Excel spreadsheet) and that it's extensive. The list contains information about each parcel including who owns and manages it so town-owned properties can be easily extracted.

Steve suggested concentrating on the larger parcels to start with. Helen suggested Powder House Hill and Dexter Pond.

Helen noted a separate issue about interlocking parcels with different ownership (e.g., Manchester-Essex Woods) and that it would be good to have formalized agreement between parties.

Other properties that we could focus on are the Eaglehead Wildlife Area and Wyman Hill. Steve suggested that we look into linking trails between the Wilderness Conservation Area and the Wyman Hill area.

After a discussion of various parcels, Mike asked if the committee was in agreement that we start on this goal by focusing on Powder House Hill, Dexter Pond and Wyman Hill. All agreed. Mike asked if we should take a walk through Wyman Hill. Helen suggested that we contact George Smith who has a restriction on an adjacent parcel in the area and knows the area well. Francie stated that he's scheduled to lead a walk for MECT on either May 15 or 29th. Francie will let us know once it is firmed up. Mike said he would also speak with George. This will be a good opportunity to walk the area.

Mike then asked how we should proceed with Powder House Hill. Steve said he would do an assessment there. As for Dexter Pond, a maintenance project is already underway by Mike McDonagh and other volunteers. Mary reported that they're in the Phase I which entails cutting back brush along the trail. Phase II is more involved since it will involve replacing a footbridge and installing a plank boardwalk near the dam. This will require funds and permitting. It was decided that we would ask Mike McDonagh to attend our next meeting to talk in more detail about Phase II and how we can partner with him to get it done. Mary will contact him.

It was noted that there is a Conservation Fund that can be used for work on town-owned conservation property which has about \$30,000 as long as it's approved by the Conservation Commission.

Mike then brought up Action Item #3 of Goal 3 – to work with local land trusts and conservation orgs to manage interlocking lands cooperatively. Steve thought that we should start by contacting each group to find out how they are managing their respective parcels. First of all, get the information and then figure out where

to go from there. Helen said that Bill Vachon is the one to contact re MECT trails. Mary said that she is still putting together a list of contacts which she'll make available to everyone.

Goal 5 (Identify the town's recreational needs and create work plans to address those needs), assigned to Sara. Sara Levensohn handed out a draft notes for Goal 5. In regard to the first action, a list of the town-owned recreation areas can be found on the town's website (under Recreation).

Action #2 was to prioritize those recreation spaces that will need improvement. Sara mentioned Skate Park and what to do with it.

Action #3 may entail establishing a fields committee which they are now discussing since the Donovan Fields Committee has been disbanded.

Action #4 is to make the town more bike and pedestrian friendly. This really needs input from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee. We need to contact them.

Action #5 – Safe Route to Schools – this project has been completed.

Action #6 – Downtown Improvement Committee. Need to contact them to see what projects are underway.

Actions 8 – 10 – it was noted that these weren't high priority or year 1 or 2 items so no need to spend time on these now.

Goals 6 and 7 (had been assigned to Frank Marangell): Mike volunteered to contact Frank Marangell to see if he had put anything together for these goals. (Frank resigned from the committee as of 1/27.) Francie asked if we'd be able to get someone else from the Planning Board. Mary said she had already contacted them about appointing someone else.

The committee then set the date/time of the next meeting for Wed. March 16 at 6:30 pm.

Helen noted that she would have a map of the watershed parcels for this meeting.

Motion to Adjourn: Helen

Second: Sara

Referenced Documents:

- Draft Strategy Work Plan for Goal #3 from Steve Jaworski
- Goal #5 Notes from Sarah Levensohn