



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

CONSERVATION COMMISSION • TOWN HALL
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Open Space and Recreation Committee

April 6, 2016

Town Hall, Room 7 ♦ 6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Helen Bethell, Francie Caudill, Steve Jaworski

Members Absent: Mike Chapman, Sara Levensohn

Others Present: Mary Reilly, Grants Administrator

Steve Jaworski, who chaired the meeting in Mike Chapman's absence, opened the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

It was decided to defer the approval minutes to the next meeting.

Action Plans and Goals:

Discussion of Helen Bethell's Watershed Report

Helen distributed copies of her watershed report which she prepared to help the committee determine what parcels should be considered for protection, given their respective locations in the Gravelly/Round Pond and Lincoln Street well watersheds.

Helen went through the report with the committee. She noted that the report is only a summary and that more could be done in regard to visuals and presentations. Helen incorporated figures generated by Amy Blondin at MECT who has created GIS maps of the watershed with parcel information (ownership, size, etc.). The watershed resides in Manchester, Hamilton, Wenham and Beverly. Approximately 339 acres in Manchester could potentially be protected (undeveloped land, not already protected).

Helen identified the top priority parcels needing protection. The highest priority consists of two parcels owned by Gordon College (152.5 acres), in the upper northwest corner of Manchester. Gordon has been approached several times over the years but hasn't been interested. Helen noted that a careful strategy has to be developed before going back to them.

Another parcel (42 acres) is located south of Route 128. We need to put a strategy together to see if we can protect this parcel. Mary said she would approach the property owner to find out if there's still an interest in protecting this parcel.

A third parcel (30 acres), privately owned, should also be investigated. No one at the meeting know the owner but the next step would be to find out who does and to put together a strategy to protect this land.

Helen continued through the list of parcels and talked about their potential for protection.

Steve Jaworski asked if the town ever sells off parcels that it doesn't need. Helen responded that the town held a vote at a town meeting (in the 70s) that town property cannot be auctioned off without first offered to the Conservation Commission (right of first refusal). In any case, there probably isn't a lot of parcels that fall into this category.

The committee continued with a discussion on the Lincoln Street Well watershed. Only half of the watershed in Manchester is protected. Two main parcels in Manchester that should be protected are:

- Essex County Club
- Shingle Place Hill (between School St. and Old School St.)

There is a parcel in the Essex County Club that is apparently owned by the town. Mary will look into its status.

Steve has a lot of questions about abandoned property (e.g., Wyman Hill area). George Smith has an Agricultural Restriction on a parcel but some are unknown. Steve noted that we have to first understand the status of each parcel and have a strategy for each.

There are a number of parcels that are town-owned that could potentially be voted into Conservation at town meeting. Helen volunteered to prepare an article for next year's town meeting for these parcels.

Cape Ann Trails

Mary said that we really don't have enough information to discuss their efforts at this time. Francie noted that it turns out that they don't have a trail map.

Misc

Francie announced that MECT will be holding its Spring Walks and one of them includes the Wyman Hill trails—a parcel that this committee has been interested in. This will be held on May 29th. There are a number of walks that may be of interest to members of the committee.

Next Meeting

Mary will send out an email to coordinate the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Referenced Documents:

- Bethell OSRP Watershed Report