

Land Management & Acquisition Committee Minutes

10 Feb 2015 Meeting #18

Present: Ted Asherman, Dave Gagnon, Bob Shafto, Aaron Svedlow, Analiese Larsen, Nathan Poore, Dave Goldberg, Fred Mascioangelo. Guests: Caleb Hemphill.

Item #1: January 6th Minutes

Dave Gagnon moved and Fred Mascioangelo seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the December 9th meeting. Approved 4-0.

Item #2: Sub-Division Trails & Easement Monitoring

Town planner Ethan Croche explained the process by which the Planning Board makes decisions about who will own conservation set-aside property, determine trail locations, etc. He also explained what requirements homeowners associations must meet if they hold conservation land and how the Planning Department enforces those requirements.

The Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for enforcing subdivision plan requirements. Negotiating a resolution is the first option in the case of violations, but an enforcement action that may result in a fine will be used if negotiation doesn't work.

Going forward, the Planning Board needs to ensure that public access to trails is written into the plan requirements if they are part of the plan (the town cannot require public access). That involves getting an easement for the trails and having that easement recorded.

Since 2006, homeowners associations must file a report every two years regarding the status of the conservation land, trails, etc. they are responsible for. These assessments are done by a 3rd party. Only one such subdivision is subject to this requirement (Hemlock Woods off Woods Rd.).

Two ideas for encouraging developers to give the conservation land to the town or Trust? (1) Have the Planning Board offer additional flexibility in lot size, configuration or number of lots in exchange for donation of openspace to Town or Trust; and (2) Revise our taxation policy to make such set-aside land taxable.

A key to seeing that requirements are met over time is the strength of the relationship among the Planning Department, LMAC and the Conservation Commission. We need to keep talking.

Item #3: Open Space Rating

We agreed to include how well a potential acquisition property aligns with the Comprehensive Plan as part of the "Falmouth Priorities" rating item. We agreed that the rating priorities used in the 2007 form were still germane, with no additions or deletions needed. We then created a composite ranking of those priorities. Ted, Dave, and Bob will meet and create a draft point rating scheme for review at our next meeting.

Item #4: 2014 Annual Report

Members liked the draft annual report, but will add approval of the harvest plan as a goal for next year. Bob will submit it to the Town Clerk.

Item #5: Updates

- Bob will convene people to rate the Sukeforth property once the snow has diminished.
- Nathan, Ted, Aaron, and Bob will meet soon to talk about getting the Council requested ecological assessment, and by extension approval of our Blackstrap Hill harvest plan on a future Council agenda.
- Bob is working with BRI to do a breeding bird survey this spring on various town properties. Aaron will also be part of this process.
- Aaron and Bob are using game cameras to try and document New England cottontails on the River Point property.

Next Meeting March 10th, 8:15 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.