



LMAC
(Land Management and Acquisitions Committee)

Approved Meeting Notes
Friday, January 18, 2019

Members Present: John Adelman; Fred Farber; David Gagnon; and Chris Kittredge
Members Absent: Casey Webster
Ex-officio: Jennifer Grimm, FLT Executive Director
Liaisons: Michael Vance, FLT President; Caleb Hemphill, Town Councilor and Karen Jacobsen, Conservation Commission
Council Liaison: Ted Asherman, Town Council
Staff: Amanda Stearns, Open Space Manager and Lucky D'Ascanio, Parks and Community Programs Director

1. Call to Order - John called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 am.

Amanda welcomed everyone and asked that all use the handouts to enter their scoring for the various categories of recommended actions. These are organized by the three categories created by the committee: Acquisition, Management and Operations and Communication.

Once that exercise was complete and Fred entered the overall scores, the committee reviewed the actions by rank for each category. It was noted that the two added items, trail maintenance and development plan and the invasives plan scored very low as not everyone ranked them.

The following charts show the ranking and scores for each action. Discussion on the individual items follows.

Management & Operations		Rank
ex	Develop a comprehensive trail maintenance and development plan	1
5-2	Develop and/or update land management plans for all open space properties that are the responsibility of the Town and encourage other organizations with open space properties in Falmouth to do the same.	2
5-3	Ensure adequate staffing, volunteer, and capital resources to execute management plans and fulfill any other operational open space needs. Where certain positions require ongoing funding, ensure that the Town's budgetary allocations meet the needs of the program.	2
ex	Develop an implementation strategy from the recently completed comprehensive invasives control and management plan	4
5-1	Incorporate new data to make the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) more powerful in identifying, prioritizing, and managing open space protection efforts.	5

1-6	Develop a monitoring system to assure that requirements of Town permit approvals regarding open space, trails, and corridors are properly executed.	5
2-3	Develop a user impact assessment of open space parcels, including compatibility of current uses and identification of underutilized and overutilized parcels. Monitor user impact and adjust as necessary to ensure optimal user experience and preservation needs. Use the open space inventory and user impact assessment to determine where natural resource protection and recreational access need to be improved.	7
2-5	Enhance accessibility to open spaces for the handicapped, special accommodations and elderly populations.	8
4-5	Review and update land use ordinances as necessary, including, but not limited to, open space provisions for Residential Planned Developments.	8
4-2	Expand the review of all development proposals to include the Open Space Manager to help determine their potential and/or plan for open space preservation and trail connections.	10
5-4	Formalize agreements between the Town and organizations such as the Falmouth Schools and Falmouth Land Trust regarding open space stewardship, educational programming and sharing of resources.	11

5-2 – It was agreed that this is a very high priority and that land management plans are related to other plans that are subject related such as the invasives plans, trail plans and harvest plans. Staff will work up a format and outline for review by the committee, including how to integrate and connect with other plans that overlap topics. It was noted that impact assessments under 2-3 for each property should be done prior to the development of a plan update.

1-6 – This was discussed as several members had different interpretations of what this had intended. Amanda explained that the action as she understood was to make sure that any work in an open space area has required local, state or federal permits. This may have been an issue in the past but there is now a requirement that any trail development and any work that needs other permits such as shoreland zoning, DEP permits and the like go through Community Development and are signed off by appropriate staff. The committee agreed that this is very important but does not need attention.

5-1 – This should be moved up in the ranking and replace 1-6. Quality and source of data is crucial and applicability to open space needs. It was noted that the current GIS system was initially designed for storing and displaying tax assessment data and then added to over time. Some departments have been developing special applications to the GIS system. The current budget for this coming year does not include any funds for GIS upgrades.

2-5 – Properties would need to be evaluated individually to determine which might lend itself to providing some accessible trails and activities. The Woods Road Community Forest currently has a grant funded trail at the Woods Road entrance.

4-2 – No action required, ongoing activity.

5-4 – It was noted that this is evolving and ongoing at present.

Acquisition		Rank
1-1	Establish an annual open space acquisition appropriation amount of \$500,000 by the Town.	1
1-2	Review and update the Open Space Rating Guides used by LMAC in evaluating potential acquisition and trail properties to reflect: (1) the variation in development patterns in the growth and rural areas and (2) the variation of open space that is desired in the growth and rural areas. For example, the criteria for open space in rural areas should reflect the need for acquisition of large parcels or smaller parcels that, when combined, create large parcels, or those lands that provide connectivity for the purposes of habitat conservation/corridors, natural resource protection, and trails. Similarly, the criteria for open space in the growth area should reflect the need for walkability and accessibility of smaller, more developed open spaces for recreational and aesthetic purposes, as well as increasing connectivity for the purposes of habitat conservation and corridors, natural resource protection and trails.	2
3-3	Protect and expand habitat corridors to allow greater access for wildlife to unfragmented habitat areas (within Falmouth and beyond).	3
4-1	Identify the suitability for preservation of remaining undeveloped properties and those containing trails with accompanying trail licenses and prioritize those parcels that also have a high potential or risk for development. Enter into a dialogue with the owners of these properties about property or trail preservation potential.	4
1-3	Preserve lands that provide specific benefits or achieve specific goals that will enhance the chances for acquisition of supporting grants or funding (e.g. wetlands or vernal pool protection/enhancement funds, farming and forestry grants, trail connection grants, shoreline access funding, etc.)	5
3-1	Increase access to open spaces designated for recreation in accordance with the following benchmarks: a. Within the Growth Area: Strive for walkable access to all residents, e.g. an open space within a 5-minute walk or within a quarter-mile. b. Within the Rural Area: Strive for an interconnected recreational trail network with good signage and readily available maps.	6
1-5	Identify the conservation tools and resources available to the Town and utilize these tools and resources in discussions with landowners, policy makers, and other stakeholders to promote open space preservation (see Goal 4).	7
1-4	Protect waterfront and water access areas; incorporate active farmland, viable timberland, and other working lands; and reflect the need for resilient and adaptable ecosystems, including factors occurring due to climate change, such as the increasing intensity of storms, sea level rise and changes/threats to habitat.	8
3-5	Promote regional interconnectivity by acquiring and planning for open space that connects with recreation trails and open space in neighboring municipalities.	9
3-4	Protect waterfront areas for coastal and riparian habitat, fishing, non-motorized watercraft, swimming, passive recreation, and similar activities.	10
2-6	Develop an approach for preserving and acquiring access to smaller, more developed open space areas with recreational value.	11
4-3	Proactively negotiate with developers and owners property acquisition through fee title or easement before development proposals are prepared and submitted to the Town for review.	12

- 4-4 Explore certain fee-in-lieu programs, such as the following:
 - a. allow added residential density to a project subject to payment into an open space fund dedicated for use by the Town to fund open space acquisition; or
 - b. implement a fee for development impacts within natural resources and buffers, with the funds dedicated to protecting natural resources and buffers in other parts of the town.
- 13**

1-1 – ongoing, well established. Council has a history of funding any project they feel valuable, either through appropriations or fund balance.

1-2 All acquisition goals need to be added to the rating sheet, including 1-4, 3-3 and 3-4 in this category. Rural and growth should be treated equally, as well as trail connections and accessibility. Suggestion to design ratings so that they can be multi-dynamic to adjust for various goals. Staff will continue to pull together all acquisition goals to develop a new rating sheet. The format and process will be reviewed by the committee as well.

4-2 and 4-3 – look at combining these two actions as both refer to different stages of the development process.

Communication/Outreach/Education		Rank
2-1	Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of current open spaces, their uses, and available amenities.	1
6-1	Ensure that the public is appropriately apprised of the presence, access to, and use of Town open space through the communication processes around open space land management.	2
6-3	Improve graphic materials that depict the range of open space locations and uses (e.g. invest in maps, brochures, web pages, perhaps a Global Positioning System (GPS) enabled app depicting open space boundaries, access points and trails, etc.).	3
6-2	Prepare a communication and outreach strategy that underscores the broad community support for open space preservation.	4
2-4	Coordinate efforts with neighboring communities and non-governmental conservation and recreation organizations to preserve and enhance regional open space, trails, and wildlife corridors.	5
6-4	Strengthen the bond and connection that different population groups feel with existing open spaces. Examine current and new opportunities for open space use, and explore expanded partnerships with stakeholder organizations, such as Falmouth Community Programs, Falmouth Land Trust, Falmouth Schools, and the media. Examples of these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supporting educational programs focused on natural resource conservation that are already underway, such as the Land Trust's work in school programming; b. Supporting the development of young leaders and enthusiasm for open space conservation through grants, contests, and internships; and, c. Re-engaging the public in the natural history of open spaces and their natural resource and ecosystem values in partnership with local organizations such as the Falmouth Historical Society, Falmouth Land Trust, or Maine Audubon. 	6

3-2	Implement related actions in the 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan incorporating non-open space connections between open spaces. Consider sidewalks, lanes, and driveways to help create a more connected system for walking and bicycling.	7
2-2	Develop an up to date understanding of open space users and their needs and expectations.	8
6-5	Develop short term (<12mo.), medium term (2-3 yrs.) and long term (ongoing) awareness building campaigns with the media, through effective signage, information, and events aimed at maximizing citizen engagement.	9
6-7	Educate the public about Falmouth's open spaces and trail networks by utilizing the existing outreach strength of neighboring communities and potential partner organizations (e.g. Portland Trails, Maine Audubon, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, the Greater Portland Chapter of the New England Mountain Bicycling Association).	10
6-6	Develop a feedback mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the open space education strategy.	11

6-1, 2-2 and 6-7 – Improvement needed on townwide, the where, why and what. Important to emphasis the conservation aspects of open space along with the recreational aspects. Relates to the impact assessments to assure that certain properties are not over used.

6-2 – continue outreach and build support for conservation efforts

6-4 – replace “Strengthen” with “Support” as the key active verb, swap 6-4 and 2-4 in the ranking.

It was agreed that staff would work on the reordering of rankings where noted and start to tease apart various actions that are combined in the list, as well as combine actions where they overlap. The goal is to develop a more succinct list of actions. This list will be available for the committee at their February 11 meeting to continue the develop of a multi-year plan for which a budget can be developed.

2. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 pm.