

**Amesbury Open Space, Natural Resources, and Trails Committee**  
**May 25, 7:00 p.m.**

Attending: S. Thiel, P. Frey, P. Rettig, J. Lopez, V. Johnson-Hall, J. Sherwood, R. Hucksam.  
Carol Decker, West Newbury Wild & Native (Guest).

1. Call to Order 7:01pm

2. **Minutes** from March 23, 2022 meeting : Moved S. Thiel; 2<sup>nd</sup> P. Rettig

3. **Communications:** OCED – Quimby Lane / Signage / Borders 4/19/22 email

No specific action requested from City. From abutter of Quimby Lane Open Space – had seen someone vandalizing tree on conservation land, brought up questions: Who manages open space? Signage? They suggested City should mark boundaries of City open space. J. Lopez said that Cons Comm does not typically mark boundaries. Commission does requires permanent property boundaries by developers when open space is required as part of development. Developers have pushed back on cost of granite bounds. It would be in the City's best interest to mark boundaries where trespassing / encroachment is most likely to occur and for City to install signs clearly stating land ownership as conservation land by the City.

**5. Chair's Report**

- Conflict of interest & open meeting required training for OSNRT members.
- OSNRT Facebook page postings. Please let Jonathan know about other postings ideas.
- Deer Island Improvements - Received grant via AIA. May Cons Comm meeting approved RDA. DPW will be replacing wooden fence with granite blocks, refreshing surface, cutting trees that are a hazard, and updating signage. City and COC are collaborating on creating sign templates for wayfinding around town, including open spaces. Chamber has contract with designer to create signage for City property.
- Locke Hill Lane – J. Sherwood prepared conservation benefits information for Cons Comm on Locke Hill Lane open space. City never accepted land as open space or otherwise permanently preserved land as was required in development permit. Prepared memo recommending that Cons Comm accept care, custody & control of land.
- New Council Rules re: Council Representation (including on OSRNTC): Proposed change to City Council representation on OSNRT to no representation to ease burden on City Councilors. This is an opportunity to rethink composition and total number on OSNRT committee. Having representation from Cons Comm and Planning Board is important as they have technical expertise that directly benefits discussions and actions of the OSNRT Committee.

6. **Referrals:** None at this time

**7. Ongoing Projects**

- Required Protected Land Criteria (Rettig + Johnson-Hall) - Consider including piece about OSNRT making recommendation on what open space should be set aside when required. V. Johnson-Hall and P. Rettig to work on draft letter to send to Planning Board. Draft letter to be presented at June OSNRT meeting for an action item for approval.
- **Land Management and Planning – Documentation** (Sherwood): No money in proposed budget for management planning. One recommendation was to collect baseline data on City properties,

such as copies of deeds, CRs, etc. City reached out to MVPC about potential to use MIMAP as platform to collect baseline data. Cost to City would be \$2000 – 2500/year. Would build out functionality, build fields that are needed. Can data be automatically transferred from the City via API?

- 2020-27 OSR Plan – NEW EOEEA Conditional Approval – Responses Req'd

## 8. Other Business

### A. Amesbury Elementary School plantings. Carol Decker, W Newbury Wild & Native guest speaker.

WNWN formed through climate resilience workshops looking at the role of native plants in W Newbury and residents looking for more information on native plants. Doug Tallamy is a great resource and inspiration. When you go to nurseries, virtually all is non-native. We have drastic decline in native pollinators, which play a much greater role in plant pollination than European honeybees. We no longer have native plants to support them. Worked with Pentucket School renovation to incorporate more native plants. There were some native trees but most other trees and shrubs were cultivars, not native varieties. Native plants have seeds and support insects to support drastically declining native bird population. Mass Invasive plant list is woefully out of date; Federal list is more up to date. Superintendent of schools was open to working with WNWN to incorporate more native plants into planting plan. Worked with landscape architect who is the same landscape architect as for AES (Bill Brown). WNWN sent a letter to landscape architect recommending natives for AES.

WNWN sent letter to J. Sherwood, N. Wheeler, C. Poitier, J. Lopez, and V. Johnson-Hall. More appropriate for OSNRT to send letter to AES Building Committee (N. Wheeler and C. Poitier from Cons Comm are on it).

Cons Comm always required native, non-hybridized plants within jurisdictional areas. Cons Comm has no jurisdiction in other areas. BSC is adamant about native, non-hybridized species.

J. Lopez suggested economic incentive such as reduction in permitting fees if incorporate native plantings and other green infrastructure. The most direct cost savings is if you come to us with a climate resilient plan that's one less change Cons Comm has to recommend. Might be worth being more explicit about list of native plants about requirements. Incentive is faster review process; less changes.

- V. Johnson-Hall to draft letter to present to OSNRT at June meeting.

### B. Locke Hill Lane

Planning Board 2014 order of conditions required that land be permanently preserved. Development completed in 2028 with 12.5 acres of open space surrounding Locke Hill Lane development. Deed into City was never recorded. City wants memo to be presented to Cons Comm for their acceptance.

*Motion made to submit Memo to Conservation Commission recommending that Cons Comm accept care, custody and control of the Locke Lane Open Space – V. Johnson-Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> – P. Frey. All approved.*

9. Motion to Adjourn 8:46pm – Moved: V. Johnson-Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Thiel. All approved.