



**Ashland
Open Space
& Recreation
Committee**

Roberta Soolman,
Chairperson

William Child

Martin Ring

Beth Rosenblum

Judith Sallet

Amy Sayed

Cindy Shields

Jeanne Walker

Greg Wands

Approved Meeting Minutes: January 12, 2016

Town Hall, Ashland, MA

Members Present: William Child, Marty Ring, Beth Rosenblum, Judith Sallet, Amy Sayed, Cindy Shields, Roberta Soolman, Jeanne Walker and Greg Wands

Guests: Erin & Chase Williams, Steve Greenberg

Welcome/Introductions: Ms. Soolman opened the meeting at 7:36 pm.

Guests: Erin Williams asked her son Chase, to inform the OSRC the reason why he and his mother are attending the meeting tonight. Chase said there is a hiking trail that begins in his backyard where he and his mother would like to create a soccer field and multi use park by cutting back the existing overgrown weeds. Erin said that this field would connect the Long Trail within Hopkinton State Park to the spur trail behind the homes on Holly Lane and Pinecrest Lane. Erin said the site is town-owned, Kinder Morgan has an easement for an underground gas pipeline (approx. 30'-wide by 100'-long) and that she would like to turn this gas line area into a field for the neighborhood. Erin said there are only three (3) direct abutters to the pipeline and that all of the neighbors agree with the proposal to convert the pipeline into a neighborhood field. Erin asked the OSRC what process would need to be followed for turning town-owned land into a park.

Ms. Soolman replied that ownership of the property would first need to be verified, a determination whether any encroachments exist on the property, the legal status of the Kinder Morgan easement and the costs for the proposed work. Erin said she has been in touch with Kinder Morgan and that they were receptive to the idea, and added that the site needs major work to remove the overgrown weeds. Ms. Rosenblum asked whether there would be a need for ongoing maintenance. Mr. Wands asked if the greatest costs would likely be seed and soil. Erin responded that the work would require grading, weed whacking, delivery and installation of clean fill, seeding, and purchase of soccer nets, geodesic dome, and small moveable play structures. Ms. Soolman said that fall town meeting could be a goal to seek funding for this project. OSRC members said that public accessibility (beyond the project abutters) would be desirable, and asked where there might be access to the area for the public. OSRC members noted that it would be necessary for vehicular access to the site to deliver the soil, and it was not clear if access is available since the property is located behind private homes and not along a public roadway. It was agreed that further investigation and information is needed before the proposal could move forward.

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes of February 10, 2015 were reviewed. Upon motion by Ms. Walker, seconded by Mr. Ring, the OSRC voted (6-0-3 with Mr. Child, Ms. Sayed and Mr. Wands abstaining) to approve the minutes as amended;



- Minutes of December 8, 2015 were reviewed. Upon motion by Mr. Ring, seconded by Mr. Child, the OSRC voted (7-0-2 with Ms. Sallet and Ms. Walker abstaining) to approve the minutes as amended.

Sign Invoices: The OSRC reviewed expenditures made by Ms. Soolman (\$34.84) and Ms. Walker (\$29.02) related to the Warren Woods walk. Upon motion by Ms. Sallet, seconded by Mr. Ring, the OSRC voted (9-0) to approve reimbursement of the expenditures.

Recommendation of member for Warren Woods Ad Hoc Committee: Upon motion by Mr. Ring, seconded by Ms. Rosenblum, the OSRC voted (9-0) to appoint Mr. Wands as their representative to the WW Ad Hoc Committee. Ms. Soolman will inform the Town Clerk and Selectmen's office of the appointment.

Charter Review Public Forums: Ms. Soolman announced the dates of the public forums and invited the OSRC members to attend. Ms. Rosenblum suggested including an agenda item for the next meeting to gather OSRC member comments.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP): Ms. Soolman informed the committee that Jennifer Raitt has left MAPC to take a planning job in the town of Arlington.

The committee reviewed the Acknowledgement section of the prior OSRP in order to add the names of those who have helped prepare the update. Ms. Walker spoke about the ADA section and said that ADA Compliance Notices have been posted at Town Hall and that Recreation Director Kelly Rund has provided ADA compliance information about Stone Park, the Community Center and Warren Woods. Ms. Walker said that only town owned recreation facilities, under the authority of the Conservation Commission or the Recreation Department need to be evaluated for ADA compliance. Ms. Walker said that Warren Woods should have one (1) handicapped accessible parking space. Ms. Walker said she learned that there are no handicapped children participating in any of the programs offered by the Recreation Department.

Ms. Soolman said the Narrative and Action Plan draft would be sent out two (2) weeks before the next meeting for review. Ms. Soolman said the services of either Lynne Fielding or Ms. Shields would be needed to create the Action Plan map.

Updates:

Land Stewardship Committee (LSC): Mr. Wands said new maps were installed in the kiosks.

Conservation Restriction Working Group (CRWG): Ms. Rosenblum said that Town Counsel had reviewed the Oak Street CR.

Bay Circuit Alliance (BCA): Mr. Child said there was no news to report.

Upper Charles Trail Committee: Mr. Child said the committee was faced with two (2) setbacks; the discussion between CSX and the Town of Sherborn have halted, and the developer of the Rail Transit District has now backed out of preparing that section of trail as they claim it is too steep and too costly. Mr.



Child also said the Town of Holliston had completed their purchase of former CSX rail line.

Stormwater Management Committee: Ms. Walker said the committee has not met since Mr. Selby's departure, and added there is a joint meeting with the Water Policy Committee scheduled for January 21, 2106.

Other Business: At 8:30 pm, following a request by the OSRC to provide additional information about a grant being sought and which includes seeking the endorsement and support of the OSRC, Steve Greenberg of the Ashland Sporting Association (ASA) addressed the committee. Mr. Greenberg spoke about the mission of the ASA to improve Marathon Park and its connection to the Bay Circuit Trail through a bridge crossing over the Sudbury River between the Fish and Game Club and the VFW. Mr. Greenberg spoke about Nyanza and an associated art exhibit by Ashland native Dan Borelli.

Mr. Greenberg said he is searching for grant monies and is requesting that the OSRC to be a partner/supporter of the grant application. Mr. Greenberg said he is seeking collaboration with the OSRC to pursue grant monies to: improve access to trails, the river crossing, and to support the Nyanza art exhibit. Ms. Soolman asked what the grant timeline is. Mr. Greenberg replied that the grant writer wants to submit the application by February 1, 2016. Ms. Shields asked who was offering the grant monies. Mr. Greenberg said it is an EPA grant which has a 4-page narrative relative to Nyanza. Ms. Walker asked specifically what the grant would be funding. Mr. Greenberg said he would share the grant presentation with the chair once it was completed, and that the grant would fund up to \$55,000 for bridge permitting. Ms. Soolman asked how this project matches with the OSRC's Riverwalk project? Mr. Greenberg replied this project would improve the VFW, the Fish and Game site, Marathon Park, and bridge installation. Ms. Shields asked why the Fish and Game would receive financial assistance. Mr. Greenberg said he believes that the Fish and Game owns the land along the Sudbury River where the bridge is proposed. Ms. Rosenblum said that the OSRC had the land surveyed by GLM Engineering along with deed research, and the findings showed that the town owns a section of the current Fish and Game parking lot in the proposed bridge location. Ms. Soolman asked how the grant funds would be used. Mr. Greenberg said for possible acquisition costs. Ms. Soolman asked what Mr. Greenberg what the Nyanza component of the grant is. Mr. Greenberg said that the park would be a location to commemorate Nyanza.

Ms. Soolman said that the OSRC does not meet again before the grant is due. Mr. Ring asked Mr. Greenberg to identify the focus of the grant. Mr. Greenberg said the grant is focused on open space, Nyanza impact, EPA study, re-establishing open space, bridges, amenities, and Marathon Park. Mr. Ring asked Mr. Greenberg to articulate the vision more clearly; is it to provide ADA access? Will the bridge tie in to existing open space and trails? Mr. Ring stated that the OSRC already has plans for the Riverwalk Trail expansion, and asked Mr. Greenberg to provide specifics about what he was seeking the grant funding for. Mr. Greenberg said it is a more general concept; access to the Fish and Game, improved access to the VFW. Ms. Rosenblum asked Mr. Greenberg to provide a break down of what the \$55,000 being sought would be used to fund. Mr.



Greenberg replied that the grant is only at the concept level now. Ms. Shields asked whether more expenditure details would be available if the \$55,000 was awarded? Mr. Greenberg replied that it would, since the monies would allow him to hire a designer and to develop renderings, and also to make choices on spending.

Mr. Greenberg asked the OSRC to give him an answer by next week whether or not they would support the grant application. Mr. Greenberg stated he would like a copy of the GLM plans to include in the grant application. Ms. Soolman said she is concerned that a mixed message may be sent that the OSRC was a participant in the grant application if the Riverwalk plans are used or that the grant writer may misstate the OSRC's role. Mr. Ring asked who the recipient of the grant would be. Mr. Greenberg replied the recipients would be multiple 501c3 organizations under the Ashland Sporting Association. Mr. Ring asked how the ASA directly supported improvements to town property. Mr. Greenberg said the Ashland Department of Public Works has a revolving account that the ASA would deposit the grant funds into. Mr. Ring raised ethics concerns and questioned the transparency of using a grant awarded to a private entity and how it could be used for improvements to public property.

Mr. Ring then asked Mr. Greenberg, in his capacity as Affordable Housing Trust chair, for information about the Weston Nurseries housing plan. Mr. Greenberg said that Meridien Engineering was developing a concept plan for affordable and market rate housing along with open space. Mr. Ring asked about the density target for the Weston Nurseries site. Mr. Greenberg replied that the number of units has not been identified yet, and that the school Athletic Director has been contacted in regards to a possible recreation component of the site's development.

The OSRC thanked Mr. Greenberg for attending.

After Mr. Greenberg left, the OSRC discussed whether or not to endorse the grant application. Members spoke about not having a good understanding of exactly what the grant will fund, the perceived lack of accountability, the startling vagueness of the project proposal, and the lack of supporting facts and data. Upon motion by Ms. Sallet, seconded by Ms. Walker, the committee voted (9-0) to have Ms. Soolman send an email to Mr. Greenberg which states that the OSRC cannot agree to be a partner in the grant application, and is seeking confirmation that the Riverwalk plans and permitting obtained by the OSRC cannot be used as part of the grant application or be used in order to claim ownership of the Riverwalk project.

Ms. Soolman confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2016.

Upon motion by Mr. Ring and seconded by Ms. Walker, the Committee voted (9-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Rosenblum".

Beth Rosenblum