



Town of Ashland

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

Town Forest Committee Minutes

Wednesday March 8, 2023

Members Present: Martin Auger, Brian Forestal, Cara Hulme 7:20, Mike Jones, Brian McGrattan and Amol Rane

Members Absent: Ed Hart and Venkat Kakula,

Public Present: Richard Hildreth

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Mr. Hildreth was acknowledged and stated he was interested in the meeting but had no particular topics.

1. Approval of Minutes of February 8, 2023 meeting: The Ashland Town Forest Committee (ATFC) reviewed and amended the meeting minutes of February 8, 2023. A motion was made to approve the amended meeting minutes and seconded. The ATFC roll call vote was: Mr. Auger: YES, Mr. Forestal: YES, Mr. Jones: Abstained, Mr. McGrattan: YES, Mr. Rane: Yes. The motion passed 4-0-1.
2. Expense submittals & Accounting Report: None to review
3. Consideration of Rob St. Germain's request to join committee as an Associate Member (Brian M.)
The committee discussed whether there is a limit on the number of associate members, a motion was made to add Mr. St. Germain as an associate member. The ATFC roll call vote was: Mr. Auger: YES, Mr. Forestal: NO, Mr. Jones: YES, Mr. McGrattan: YES, Mr. Rane: Yes. The motion passed 4-1-0.
3. Introducing new associate member candidates: Denise Carroll, Rugved Rane, Thomas Caywood, Jacob Kasprzyk (Brian M.)
The candidates were not present, but there was a consensus that their membership would be considered after they have attended 2 meetings.
4. Final Review and Adoption of Mission Statement – Draft Attached (Brian M.)
A motion was made to approve the Mission Statement. The ATFC roll call vote was: Mr. Auger: YES, Mr. Forestal: YES, Mr. Jones: YES, Mr. McGrattan: YES, Mr. Rane: Yes, Ms. Hulme: YES. The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Formation of sub committees: Building from the Mission Statement sub committees would be formed to more quickly accomplish work. Four categories were suggested. People interested in those areas:

- a. Forestry: Mike, Martin, Brian Mc, Amol and Rob
- b. Trails and Recreation: Brian F, Cara, Martin, Amol and Ed,
- c. Education and Promotion: Cara, Mike and Brian Mc
- d. Land Acquisition Recommendations: Brian Mc (As Committee Chair) Cara and Amol

6. Appoint Comprehensive Plan Project Committee Representative (Mike)

While sign up date had passed, Cara had spoken to Mr. Herbert who said Committee representation could still be done. Ms. Hulme volunteered to be on the Comprehensive Plan Project Committee.

7. Bungalow Clean Up (Martin): Steps were reviewed of work done so far. It was felt that a pressure washer would be useful to complete the work. Mr. Hart offered the use of his gas pressure washer with water from DPW and the watering tank and pump. A time will be set to do work.

8. 2023 Public Programs – scheduling (Cara)

There was a request from David Babbitt to do a Mushroom walk on June 25th. After some discussion a motion was made to allow the walk with the restriction that never more than 1/3 of a group of mushrooms would be removed by the entire group. The ATFC roll call vote was: Mr. Auger: YES, Mr. Forestal: YES, Mr. Jones: YES, Mr. McGrattan: YES, Mr. Rane: Yes, Ms. Hulme: YES. The motion passed 5-0-0.

The Fairy Walk is set for May 20th (Cara)

Mountain bike rides will be set for every other Wednesday at 6:00 PM (Brian F)

Barberry dig was April 2 last year, can't do it this year due to lack of permit.

9. Projects and Updates Discussion (Brian F)

Purple trail work is almost done. Removal of wood and other work based on ConCom approval. (Brian F)

Electric garage door will be installed soon. (Brian F)

Pollinator garden needs a follow up. (Mike)

10. Newsletter and Annual Report

There was a discussion of a property that may go up for sale on Oregon Rd. It was felt by some that the property was not the highest priority, Brian F. felt it was a high priority. The damage that could be done with new development could be very negative to the Town Forest. Brian Mc will speak to Mike Herbert about the property.

11. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and seconded. The ATFC roll call vote was: Mr. Auger: YES, Mr. Forestal: YES, Mr. Jones: YES, Mr. McGrattan: YES, Mr. Rane: Yes, Ms. Hulme: Yes. The motion passed 5-0-0.

12. Next Meeting Dates: March 22, April 8

Ashland Town Forest Committee

Mission

The Ashland Town Forest Committee is a team of volunteers appointed by the Ashland Select Board, whose purpose is to preserve and protect the Town Forest as a habitat and open space for the benefit of current and future generations of the town's people.

Strategic Objectives

The Ashland Town Forest realizes its mission by:

- Enhancing the forest health, quality, and vitality
- Supporting passive recreational use of the forest while minimizing negative impact on the ecosystem
- Maintaining and improving its trail system
- Promoting awareness and appreciation of the forest and its value to the town
- Providing opportunities to connect with and learn about nature
- Assisting in the acquisition of additional forest land

The Ashland Town Forest

The Ashland Town Forest is an approximately 650 acre parcel of contiguous land, roughly bounded by Winter Street, Cordaville Road, Oak Street and Oregon Road in Ashland, Massachusetts. The property adjoins the Cowassock Woods, a fifty-four acre parcel in Ashland and Framingham, managed by the Sudbury Valley Trustees.

The forest hosts a large diversity of hardwoods and coniferous tree species, sedges, and wildflowers and wetland species. Deer are abundant in the forest, and it is also home to coyotes, foxes and other small mammals. Turkeys, hawks, woodpeckers, blue birds, robins and other species of birds are commonly observed.

Today, the property serves as a valuable asset to the town and its people. Approximately ten miles of trails are maintained for passive recreational use such as hiking and mountain biking. Varieties of land and wetland flora and fauna provide numerous opportunities for educational offerings produced by the Town Forest Committee. Environmentally, the forest sequesters a significant amount of carbon dioxide, contributing to Ashland's net zero objectives. The very existence of quality open space such as the Town Forest enhances the quality of life and makes Ashland a more attractive place to reside.