

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes November 2, 2015

Thain Allan called the Open Space Committee meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. in the Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH 03753.

Members Present:

Thain Allan, Chair
Allen Wilson, Vice Chair
Craig McArt, Secretary
Conrad Frey, Zoning Board of Adjustment Chair
Charlie McCarthy, Planning Board Vice Chair
Susan Buchanan, Grantham Conservation Commission

Guest: Michael McCrory, Senior Planner, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 1 meeting was made by Mr. McCarthy and seconded by Mr. Wilson.

Unanimously Approved

Old Business

None

New Business

Chairman Allan introduced Mr. McCrory of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC), who is assisting the Town of Grantham in preparation of its Master Plan update. Ms. Buchanan briefly explained the history of the Open Space Committee for his benefit. Mr. Allan provided him with an example of a completed inventory form used by the Committee in its recently completed Open Space Inventory of Grantham Land Parcels. Mr. McArt explained that a map developed to illustrate the designation and degree of conservation existing in all Town of Grantham undeveloped parcels of 10 acres or more was going to be produced in digital form by the UVLSRPC for inclusion in the Master Plan update. Mr. McCrory commented that he believed the Committee was on track with the draft outline of the Open Space Protection Plan it had developed. He also filled the Committee in on the progress being made on tabulating results of the recent Community Survey conducted for the plan.

Mr. McCarthy mentioned the Committee's intention to avoid prioritizing parcels in such a way that might arouse concerns or offend property owners. He stressed the importance of finding ways of funding purchases of open space for conservation purposes. Mr. McCrory responded by saying that the value of open space – public health, recreation, etc. – needs to be reinforced with marketing efforts in pursuit of funding opportunities. Ms. Buchanan added that the Conservation Commission sees the value of mapping trails, including indicating appropriate use of the various trails in that regard.

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Mr. McCrory said he preferred a “soft” vs. a “hard” approach in advancing the open space agenda, adding that he thought that the Open Space Protection Plan, having the basics of a good action plan, would inform the Master Plan. He said his ability to help us was limited but that he could provide a toolbox for how to develop an action plan, and we might come up with a grant that would allow the UVLSRPC to participate further. Ms. Buchanan confirmed that the Conservation Commission had \$3,000 available in its budget for the Open Space Committee.

Mr. McCrory said that acquisition of open space could happen in ways other than through purchase by the town. Ms. Buchanan thought it important to inform landowners of the options available for conserving parcels, and if a parcel becomes available there should be a tool that informs how to go about acquiring it. Mr. Frey felt that the Committee would do well to involve local land trusts, citing their experience in marketing the advantages of open space conservation as well as how to approach land owners about considering easements on their properties. Mr. Allan said that he would like to invite someone from the Ausbon Sargent Land Trust to meet with the Committee.

Mr. Wilson explained that the demographics of Grantham and especially within Eastman, which is filling up, have changed in recent years, many families with young children having moved in. He favored making use of land for recreation that is already conserved or owned by the Town so as to develop a wider, community appreciation of the benefits that can accrue from open space.

Summing up, Mr. McCrory emphasized the importance of the Committee’s outreach to land trusts as well as coming up with funding suggestions. He recommended that a value scoring system be used to provide a guidance document for interpreting the parcel inventory. He promised to provide the Committee with a toolbox on how to develop an action plan. Mr. Allan said the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee would focus on how to get the Open Space Protection Plan developed with or without UVLSRPC assistance.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. McArt and seconded by Ms. Buchanan to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Unanimously Approved

The next Open Space Committee meeting will take place on December 3, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at the Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Craig McArt,
Secretary